The Magazine for Advanced Comic Book Collectors

COMIC BOOK MARKETPLACE

No. 48
June 1997

THOSE RED, WHITE, & BLUE...

Patriotic Heroes!

PLUS: COMIC LEGEND

Nick Cardy

MURPHY ANDERSON AFTER LOU FINE

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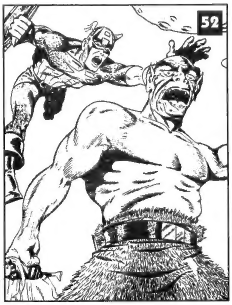

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ON THE COVER:
Murphy Anderson's spectacular recreation painting of **National Comics #7.**

Characters © Quality

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Issue Number #48, June 1997

A closeup of Cardy's "Mechanical Men" from the cover of **My Greatest Adventure #26** (Dec 1958).

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GROUNDED FOR LIFE!

"Mom and Dad threw out my comics" is a common anthem for many in our hobby. Amazingly, I was one of the lucky kids who didn't actually suffer this common family ritual. Well, not exactly…

Truth is, my lifelong love affair with comic collecting did get off to a rocky start. I had been buying just about every DC superhero and sci-fi/mystery title regularly since 3rd grade, so by the middle of 5th I had accumulated quite a bundle of Silver Age booty. But since my marks weren't all that hot, my parents decided that my most treasured possessions would be "put away until your grades improve."

They didn't, so more drastic measures were taken! As punishment, ten or so brown shopping bags containing all my books were summarily given to the neighbors… who proceeded to scatter them all over their backyard like so many pieces of scrap paper.

I was crushed… demoralized, but resolved to keep my comics. So I marched next door… teeth gritted, grimly determined to salvage my precious collection from the clutches of disaster. I entered into some tough negotiations… got my comics back… but traded away my squirt gun (the big one), my Duncan Imperial yo-yo (the red one), and my bicycle (the new one).

After the swap was completed, I began to carefully and delicately pick up each issue and stack them neatly back in those same brown shopping bags. I placed the sacks on the floor of my bedroom closet and waited for the return of my parents… certain in the knowledge that when they found out about the days trading activity, I would lose all future allowances and be grounded for life! Even though I'd prevailed for now, Mom and Dad weren't home yet, and there was still the pressing matter of grades, now made even more egregious by violating their edicts regarding the comics. In short, my days were numbered.

Returning later that afternoon, Mom and Dad were quickly informed of the events that transpired that day… yet they didn't yell… they didn't chastise… they didn't even get angry. Instead (to my astonishment) they disappeared for about five minutes, had one of those "parent pow-wows," returned and calmly said, "You can keep the comics… they obviously mean a lot to you. But you still need to work on your grades." And that was that.

As the years went by, my younger brother, Lane, began to share my passion for comics, and our closets got more and more cluttered. Eventually, Mom and Dad began not just to condone… but actually support… our collecting interests. In the late '50s and early '60s, most every other parent looked down their noses at our "disposable trash" and "kid's nonsense" … but not Mom and Dad. They just knew that "funnybooks" meant a lot to us and that we never seemed to tire of collecting them.

Then we got serious! One day we meekly asked to borrow $75 to buy one comic book! (At the going rate back then, that staggering amount equaled 4.12 years worth of allowances!) But once again, a parental miracle happened. Mom actually loaned us the money and several weeks later we got a Fine copy of *Superman* #1 in the mail from some "New York guy" named Howard Rogofsky. My Dad stared at it and then admitted that he and his cousin had purchased a copy too… back in 1939 when he was a kid. In spite of the great differences in age, we actually found we had something in common and incredibly, it was comic books! After that, Dad began regularly taking Lane and I on all-day trips to "used book" stores, loaning us a dollar or two on occasion to, as he put it "help the cause." Those were wonderful days.

Now, some three decades later, I still love comic books. And on the occasions of Mother's Day and Father's Day 1997, I thought I'd take this opportunity to say thanks to my parents for making that possible.

Thanks Mom and Dad… for being so understanding about the bike… for letting Lane and I love comics when other parents thought we were all crazy… and for allowing your kids to spend so many weekends and summers looking at comics… talking about comics… and collecting comics.

And speaking of comic books Mom and Dad… could I borrow $75,000 for a high-grade *Superman* #1? I promise I'll pay it back out of my allowance…

Gary

Gary M. Carter

COMIC BOOK MARKETPLACE

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Richie Rich please

I love the old mini Richie Rich comics. I have plenty of them. I think they are very interesting with the few dots that they used to color them in with. I like Richie because he's a kid like me, and not a superhero like Hulk or Spider-Man. I think Gloria is funny-looking, and Richie's cousin is not a good trickster. I guess that old saying goes for him, "What goes around, comes around". But really all he needs is a good dose of common sense.

I hope maybe you could write an article about Richie Rich so my Dad and I could read it.

Anna Berk, Connecticut

Hi, Anna! Gary Carter asked me to respond to your letter. As you know, things have been kind of tough for all of us Harvey characters lately. That's why it cheered me up so much to read your letter (my dog, Dollar, brought it to me the minute it came in the mail). I've asked Gary to write something about my comics, but he says that he doesn't know enough about them to do a good job, so he's waiting for a Harvey collector to write something that he can publish. Anyway, I wanted to tell you how much I appreciate your loyalty to my comics and digests. Also, Gloria says hi too!

Your friend, Richie Rich xoxox

Slices of life

As I write this letter to you all at CBM, I am watching the original Batman motion picture from 1966 on my TV. Still colorful, still fun! Just as my brother and I went to see it as kids at the movie theatre over 30 years ago in good ol' 1966. (Wow! There goes Robin again, knocking the Joker off that submarine and into the ocean.) Great year for nostalgia, "Go-Go checks" and all! And it just goes to show you don't ever sell Adam West's Batman short, for sheer nostalgic thrills. Anyway, speaking of the Caped Crusader, this leads me indirectly to the purpose of my letter; namely, to offer a few comments of feedback on your recent excellent issue #45 of Comic Book Marketplace, with its central focus upon the legendary Justice League of America. However, I'll leave it to others to remark upon some of the informative feature articles, such as, "In a League of Their Own". What I want to talk about here briefly is that engagingly written little piece from my humble editor, entitled: "Glossy Stack of 28s!"

Gary, I enjoyed very much the story about how you came to acquire your first copy of Brave & Bold #28, as I am sure many of your other readers did also. It's little "slices of life" like that which, taken together, make up the personal history or collecting mythology which each collector values and treasures in his or her memories of the past. Perhaps my use of the word mythology here has a two-fold purpose: (1) to capture the wonder, and almost magical quality often associated with one's childhood memories of comic book experiences, and (2) to also just suggest that true collectors can legitimately enjoy "mythologizing" such childhood experiences.

That is, perhaps part of the fun now is just wondering if everything back then really happened in the very same way in which we enjoy remembering it all.

However, the experience you recall in your column seems crystal-clear, and once again illustrates that the primary component of the overall hobby, at least for Golden and Silver Age collectors, is nostalgia (and the refusal to let go of impressionable childhood memories, often from many, many years ago). Gary, I'm sure Mr. Todaro of the Day & Night Market never knew that he would become a permanent part of your collecting mythology!

Although I collect primarily Silver Age Marvels, my favorite DC title is Justice League of America, and I treasure my VG/FN copy of issue #8: "For Sale...the Justice League". So I enjoyed your story and this CBM issue overall. As I am sure you will appreciate, my favorite part was when you put the coveted copy of Brave & Bold #28 into your bicycle basket and held it flat for the ride home. And imagine my surprise to discover that you were a stickler for condition even back then; having avoided the tell-tale signs of bundle wire indents on the top and bottom copies, so as to secure what was likely a NM 97 copy from the middle of the stack!

As I move to close this letter, "Batman" '66 is over with on TV and now I'm watching the classic sci-fi thriller, "War Of The Worlds". But such sci-fi fare goes well with Harry Thomas' substantial and definitive article on the Justice Leaguers; all of which seems more interesting than the assigned poetry of Ezra Pound and T.S. Eliot which I should be reading instead, for my grad literature class. But hey! I know my priorities as a collector and nostalgia buff–learned 'em early on, the first time my childhood friends and I played "Man from U.N.C.L.E." out on that hill in Catholic elementary school way back in... yep, you guessed it, 1966! I got to be Solo; my friend was Illya Kuryakin. No, not Han Solo (for you younger generation "Star Wars" aficionados), but rather, ol' Napoleon Solo, from the hit TV series in the sixties and all those great Gold Key TV photo cover comics of the same period.

Anyway, let me close by saying that the best reason to ever do anything is because it's fun and enjoyable, and not just 'cause you're getting paid money for it. Sound naive in this cynical world of ours? Then hey, consider this. Those days of youth playing "Man from U.N.C.L.E." were best. And those Catholic nuns didn't pay us kids nothin' to roll down that hill and play dead, as secret agents shot in the line of duty!

Well, that's it. Bye 4 now. And Gary and Lisa: I will see you when I look at you.

Craig Rader, Texas

Fifty year old kid

First of all, I love your great magazine. I am a 50 year old kid who loves comics and have a great collection. (1) Will the "Unseen Gold" column ever come back? (2) Can you please tell me if you will ever run some more on Rex the Wonder Dog and Detective Chimp? (3) When will the Photo-Journal Guide to Comic Books Vol. 5 & 6 for DC comics be out? Please answer.

Susan C. Budrow, Illinois

(1) We run Unseen Gold as fast as Matt Nelson writes it. So Matt... what do you think? (2) I'm a big fan of Detective Chimp and Rex as well. I'd be glad to run more arti-

cles on these two DC classics if an enterprising collector would be willing to write them. (3) Only Ernie Gerber knows for sure… but rumor has it that Volume 5 is in the works right now. I'm ready to buy my copy the second it hits my local shop.

Great Wood work

Thanks for CBM #44 and the great Wood work. I would like to add to your info that Wally Wood was so apologetic/upset when an issue of his "Woodwork Gazette" was late, that, as a bonus, he included a free original (signed) felt-tip sketch of "Sally Forth" for this subscriber.

Please pass along this question/comment to your Wood experts: In the mid to late '50s, I recall a "Smokey The Bear" single story, weekday comic strip, done by a "Wes Wood". I believe it was in the "Chicago American" newspaper, but separate from the regular comics pages. It basically starred Little Smokey and Specs the Racoon. They were trying to protect their seedling tree farm from a forest fire. I believe Smokey came in at the end, diverted the creek or river, and saved the day. Can your experts tell me the exact dates of this strip? (All I ever hear about is "Sky Masters".)

Tony Kowalik, Illinois

Canceled Comics Cavalcade #2

I am writing with a request from one rabid panepictomaniac to another, and I was told to turn to you by two individuals of your acquaintance–Richard Evans (of Houston's Bedrock City Comic Co.) and Alan Bartholomew (collector extraordinaire).

In a nutshell, I collect (and read, of course) mainly DC Comics, and I collect them by villain appearance. I try to seek out all known comics featuring my favorite villains, and I specialize in bad guys that are not major league characters; in fact, my favorite comic foes are, for all intents and purposes, non-entities. Such characters as the Signalman, Killer Moth, and the Flash's Rogues Gallery all hold high places in my heart.

To cut to the chase, I am missing one comic book that contains the only appearances I lack, of two of my favorite villains–Killer Moth and the Mirror Master. My problem is that this comic never saw print, as it is the final unpublished issue of The Secret Society of Super-Villains that was collected in the ultra-rare Canceled Comics Cavalcade #2.

My humble, groveling plea is: What would it take for me to get a high quality photocopy of that Secret Society story?

I apologize for this rather brazen request from a total stranger, but I have come to the final obstacle of completing my collection, and I am resorting to aid from my fellow comic fans. So, please… perhaps some kindly soul who has access to this book will drop me a line via CBM. I appreciate your time to read this letter. Thanks!

Justin Dunnuck, Texas

Severity of the split

Just wanted to thank you for your advice. Re: the grading of comics, particularly 80 page Giants w/spine splits. I've been struggling with this defect and how it affects the grade of an otherwise attractive book for a couple of weeks now, and just wanted you to know how much I appreciate your input.

Are there any hard and fast rules regarding the severity of the split and its impact on the final grade. I realize that minor splitting is allowed through the VG range, but are there any rules of thumb that can be applied when confronting splits of 1/3 to 2/3 of spine length?

I'm particularly interested in these major defects on otherwise strict VG+ books. For example, if an otherwise beautiful white paged giant such as Flash Annual #1 has a 2/3 length spine split, can this book be graded higher than FR+ or GD-? What about 1/3 length spine splits up or down to one staple? Are these books automatically GD or can they be graded VG- with special notation of the defect?

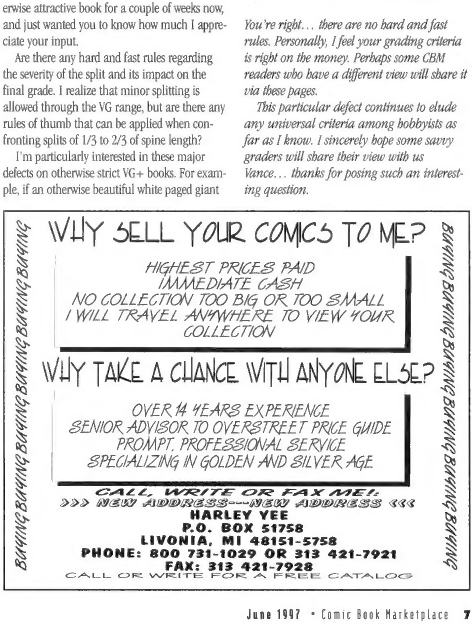
I know grading standards vary widely among dealers and that consistency in grading is usually deemed more important than any strict adherence to a particular system, but I'd really like to nail this question down. From one lover of DC Silver to another, I'd really appreciate your thoughts on this subject.

Thanks for a great magazine! If only you could eventually incorporate a Gold to post-Silver price guide…

Vance Toth, Maine

You're right… there are no hard and fast rules. Personally, I feel your grading criteria is right on the money. Perhaps some CBM readers who have a different view will share it via these pages.

This particular defect continues to elude any universal criteria among hobbyists as far as I know. I sincerely hope some savvy graders will share their view with us Vance… thanks for posing such an interesting question.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Curt Swan fan

As one having been raised on comic books since 1956, I cannot adequately express to you what a joy it is to read your magazine. There is really nothing like it out there.

Every issue opens up a time warp for me and I can take a delightful stroll down memory lane. The articles are well written and extremely informative. All those cover reproductions are stunning.

I find that ever since I have started to pick up your publication, my once moribund interest in comics has been resuscitated to the point that I am once again enjoying the hunt for back issues that were such an integral part of my childhood.

I am sure that you are aware of the fact that this coming June 12 marks the first anniversary of Curt Swan's death and I think it's high time an issue be devoted to this legend. He was surely one of the all time greats and I can think of few who would be more deserving of a tribute and retrospective of his prolific and distinguished career.

Kudos to all and to a publication that is certainly the perfect fusion of form and content.

Raul Wrona, Ontario, Canada

Curt surely is one of the all time greats and an issue devoted to him is in the works. I feel sad, though, that he won't be around to see it. It's my hope that every serious collector realizes how important it is to document the lives of comic creators as fast as we possibly can. Once they leave us… all that they experienced and never reported is forever lost!

A bit too contrived

Notwithstanding the errors in the issue, I enjoyed the nostalgic look at the JLA of old. I jumped aboard with JLA #8, and didn't look back once; though, I agree, by the time JLA #30 rolled around, the stories had gotten a bit too contrived for me. Most interesting was the source of several cover ideas, particularly the striking Felix Faust cover. As to your writers' comments on the subtext, I'd say they have a slight tendency to over-analyze. Mostly, the stories were about cooperation. And, face it, in a world where the characters never otherwise even acknowledged each others' existence, just seeing them all together in one story was thrill in itself.

If anything, the characters got along too well, and, as the sixties progressed, and Marvel slowly stole DC's thunder, in imitative fashion, they got along a little less well.

Jim Vicko, Toronto, Canada

Love At First Sight #43

I have a correction for your "Overstreet File". Overstreet shows "Love At First Sight" to have ended with #42 (8-56). I recently found #43 dated 11-56. Keep up the good work.

Dennis L. Runk, Pennsylvania

Advertising, toys, and pulps

Please continue my subscription for another year. I truly enjoy your magazine and look forward to receiving each issue. It's very obvious that it is a labor of love for everyone involved with it.

Especially enjoyed your recent articles on comic related collectibles (advertising, toys, pulps). I believe many other collectors are also interested in these areas.

Thanks for a great publication. I wish you continued success.

Tom Martin, Ohio

Top-Ten Horror

I wanted to be among the first to commend you on CBM #46. The atomic theme was wonderful and quite timely as 1950s books are the collecting rage these days.

Jon Berk's article on Bill Everett's Amazing Man was fascinating. Everett's contributions to the genesis of the medium cannot be overstated. His beautifully stylized art continues to impress almost 60 years later. How about a color gallery of some of his pre-code horror covers in a future issue?

The real highlight of the issue, however, was Jon Signorelli and Erich Medenbach's masterful examination of the 10 best horror comics. At last someone has publicly acknowledged the exquisite art of Bernard Baily. Jon and Erich's article was the perfect combination of informative research and infectious enthusiasm. Though others may disagree on some of their choices (and omissions), these two guys make a persuasive and poetic argument for their top ten. I urge you to do whatever it takes to coax more articles from Jon and Erich.

Thanks for the great trip each month.

Mark Upchurch, New York

A privilege to own

Twenty years ago the most important phone call in comic book history was made. A small-time dealer in Colorado was told about a collection of comic books for sale. With nothing better to do, this man invested a few hours to go see the collection. This year, collectors are celebrating the 20th anniversary of that trip to Denver. We want to thank both Edgar Church for amassing, and Chuck Rozanski for finding what it known today as the Mile High Collection.

I have always considered it an honor and a privilege to own any Mile High copy. I believe they truly represent comic book perfection. The fresh smell of the pages, the unsurpassed cover gloss and definitive coding is amazingly consistent. Many collectors out there only get to see damaged or heavily circulated issues and thus look down on the collection. Imagine how awesome it is to look at a stack of near-perfect comics of the same title, all appearing perfect and full of life. What more could a collector ask?

Even though Mile High copies are not always the best in existence, they are usually the most expensive. This is one reason some collectors have become wary of paying these high prices. In comparison, what would be worth more, the Hope Diamond or a slightly larger diamond? The answer is obviously the Hope Diamond. But why? Shouldn't the larger diamond be worth more? No. With the Hope Diamond, you are buying more than just a piece of rock, you are buying history. Therefore, when you buy the Mile High copy, you are buying history.

West Stephan, California

Pat Kochanek writes

Wanted to write and compliment you on the recent issue of CBM devoted to the JLA (CBM #45). JLA was my own favorite as a kid back in the early 1960s. The stories in issues 1, 3, 10, 11, 12, 21 and 22, stand out in my memory. Obviously, each of the Murphy Anderson covers is a gem. I still own my original (albeit beat up) copy of JLA #3 that I obtained in the second grade in a trade with a classmate for an issue of either Superboy or Adventure. What a great trade it was!

I also couldn't agree more with the notion

that Mystery in Space #75 is really JLA #3 1/2. As your CBM contributor pointed out, Mystery in Space #75 is the only remnant allowing us to get a sense of what it would have been like with Infantino pencils and Anderson inks on the JLA interiors (to my knowledge, the only other Anderson interiors on JLA in the Silver Age are inking Sekowsky pencils on one of the chapters in JLA Brave and the Bold #28). Pages 4, 13, 17 and 18 of Mystery in Space #75 give us some idea of what a treat this would have been. Surprisingly, I spoke with Murphy who actually stated that JLA was his least favorite assignment. He did not enjoy having to draw all of the characters on each page.

Once again, thanks for an issue that brought back some great memories.

Patrick M. Kochanek, M.D., Pennsylvania

Thanks for the reminder

Here's my renewal application! Thanks for the reminder. Your magazine makes my day when it turns up in my PO Box. Great articles!

John G. Schreiber, New Hampshire

MAD Paperbacks

Always enjoy reading letters or interviews where one is asked about their favorite comics, or comics of special interest. Often, these are listed as the "10 best" or, more recently in the CBM–the "most collectible comics". I don't know if I have a 10 best list that would differ much from others, but I have been inspired to remember some comics that were just plain good, and possibly deserve a mention.

The early Marvel comics, from the 1960s were all memorable to me. Fantastic Four #39 & 40, with the "Battle of the Baxter Building," just blew me away. The heroism displayed in this comic (and, also, Daredevil's battle with the Sub-Mariner, about this same time), had a profound influence on me as a youngster. I don't recall the details of these stories, but I imagine they hold up very well.

About 1963, I bought some MAD paperbacks. These contained reprints of MAD magazines. These were different, however, I remember one being the "Bedside Mad". This was my first exposure to the early MAD comics from EC and I was very impressed.

This was obviously a great time in comics. Jewels from the Golden Age appeared, with no fanfare and definitely left an impression. Harvey Comics came out with their Fighting American and Spirit reprints. My first thought on Fighting American was "who has the nerve to so blatantly copy Captain America"? But once I read it, I was stunned at how well this "imitation" compared! I didn't realize at first that these were reprints. The Spirit was also very impressive. It felt strange to read such entertaining stories in a Harvey comic. Up to this time, I thought of Harvey comics as the ones you read at the barber shop–not ones you would actually buy!

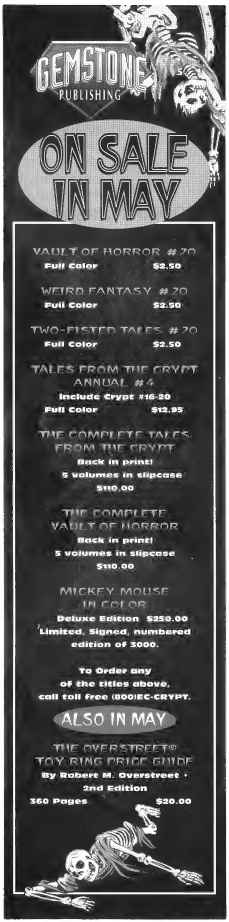
I have fond memories of the earliest Creepy and Eerie magazines. I was in 6th grade and these books really spooked me. My friends and I would stay up all night reading these stories and then deliver the Saturday papers very early in the morning. It was dark and we would spook each other, in the gloom, with lines from the books. We would then hit the candy stores and with our pockets full of sugary delights, flop in front of the TV to watch cartoons or the original Marvel Superheroes Show–I can still remember singing, "You belong, you belong, you belong, you belong, to the Merry Marvel Marching Society"! Life was good!

At this time, I eagerly awaited Famous Monsters of Filmland magazine every month. I couldn't believe it when Aurora issued the Monster model kits. I'd read about the movies in Famous Monsters, build and paint the models, and then read the Dell movie comics. I even bought the later, bizarre, Dell monster superhero comics–anything to get another taste of the Universal monsters. This fascination was unusual, in that it was only in my adult years that I actually saw the movies these works were based upon! I had seen the movies "Gorgo" and "Konga", so the Charlton comics based on these creatures hold a special place in my memories.

Last summer I was able to buy a box of Aurora monster models at an auction. I bought eight broken and badly assembled models for about $10. It was sheer heaven carefully disassembling, reassembling and painting these treasures, once again (my originals were blown up by firecrackers long ago). Dracula, Creature, Wolfman, Frankenstein, Hunchback, Phantom, Dr. Jekyll, and the Witch now adorn a special shelf in my comic room.

Growing up in a small midwestern town, during those years, I was pretty much alone in my interest in these items and comics in general. They were really private pleasures and it always surprised me that someone had enough of an interest to produce comics and models like this.

Other comics and related items that I remember with affection, were the Brain Boy comics (especially #6, which deserves another recommendation as one of *Continued on page 73*



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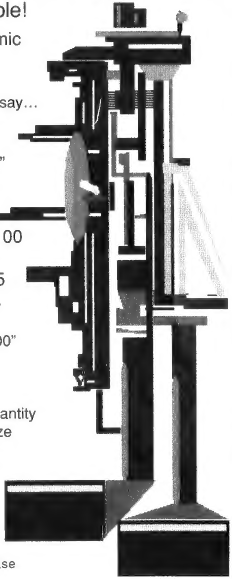

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Four-Color Sea

By Pat S. Calhoun

The post-World War II years yielded numerous adaptations of classic novels. Gilberton's *Classics Illustrated* had been issuing graphic versions of famous literature since 1941, but it took a few years for competition to come along. David McKay adapted a couple of popular Perry Mason novels for their *Feature Books* series in 1947. Timely started their *Ideal* title–with Stan Lee and Co. "horrifying" from "The Bard", and Dell published their first Zane Grey adaptation in 1948. But the most serious contender in the genre started in 1949 when Seaboard pioneered *Fast Fiction*. *Fast Fiction* #2 was the popular pirate novel Captain Blood, dated November 1949. *Fast Fiction*'s success made old Victor Fox think the genre might be a moneymaker, and he brought out a few good graphic novels, including Moby Dick, as *Feature Presentation* #6 in June 1950. Gilberton continued to hold the lion's share of the market, issuing new titles monthly from 1947 through 1954, as well as being the only comic company to reprint their books. They ran a third printing of the Jules Verne seminal early science fiction novel, "20,000 Leagues Under the Sea" (*Classics Illustrated* #47), in December 1950. For over the course of a year these three maritime masterpieces kept the smell of salt air and cries of "Ahoy" ringing across the newsstands of the USA.

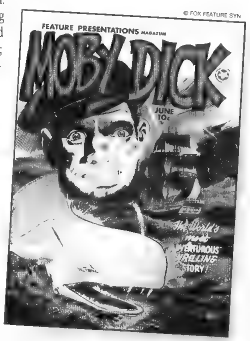
Although *Captain Blood*–the comic–has the earliest date of the three comics, the original novel by Rafael Sabatini is the most recent of the three novels, having come out in that other post-war era of 1922. The 1935 film was Errol Flynn's first swashbuckler, making him a star, and the Pocket Book edition that came out in 1940 sold through many printings (mine's a fourth from 1942), so Sabatini definitely forged an enduring "pop icon" with his story of "the Robin Hood of the Spanish Main".

The comic book version features a cover and art by Henry C. Kiefer, a Golden Age artist who produced a lot of work in a relatively simple but flavorful style, that–in this case–almost effortlessly evokes the seventeenth century. The year is 1684 and England's harsh ruler, King James, is constantly putting down rebellions. Doctor Peter Blood gives medical aid to some members of one of these rebel groups, and is later convicted of treason for it and only escapes the hangman's noose by being sold and shipped to Barbados, to be sold again as a slave. Blood becomes the doctor on a large plantation owned by the unsavory Colonel Bishop, whose beautiful daughter, Arabella, makes a deep impression on him. The man who helps Blood escape his slavery is the other doctor on the island, whose business has suffered since Blood's arrival. As Blood recruits a crew, a Spanish raid commences, and the plan changes as Blood and his men take over a Spanish ship while its crew is in town looting and pillaging.

They sail to Tortuga, where the French governor there offers to furnish Blood with arms if he will attack the Spanish treasure ships sailing the main and share in the takings. Blood accepts, and one of his first pirate exploits is taking the Spanish port of Maracaybo by the bold and clever strategy of sailing his lead ship into the harbor rigged out as a gigantic bomb. Word travels back to England of Blood's daring strikes against the Spanish, and King James sends an envoy to America bearing a full pardon and a commission in the Royal Navy to Peter Blood.

But the envoy's ship is seized by a Spanish warship–while the envoy was escorting Colonel Bishop's daughter–and they are held captive upon the Spanish vessel. Blood's ship arrives and confronts the Spaniards. Blood engages the Spanish Captain in a furious sword fight, and assures his side's victory by running his opponent through. There's yet one more set of exciting reversals and recoveries before Blood gains freedom and Arabella's hand; the plot turns are all elegantly executed and parts of an organic whole. There's a sure touch to the adaptation that caught the public's attention–and Gilberton's. Eventually Gilberton bought Seaboard and put the staff to work on their *Classics Illustrated Junior* series.

Fox's *Moby Dick* never mentions the name of Herman Melville, who wrote the massive novel in 1850 after serving a stint on a whaler. Thus the comic book–that great bestower of anonymity–commemorates the 100th anniversary of the book's creation. The cover does seem to have some early Wally Wood work in it, and the inside may well have been done in one of those Fox free-for-alls–where a group of artists and writers hole up for 48 hours and churn out the work in a mass effort–like Harry Harrison described for the production of "Samson and Delilah". Quite a bit of power is generated in the 25-page condensation, telling of Captain Ahab and his obsessive pursuit of a giant white whale, Moby Dick, who took the Captain's leg off in an earlier encounter. The story is told by Ishmael, a cabin boy who grows to young manhood on the Pequod, and the multicultural personalities of the crew members, providing dif-



In Moby Dick (officially titled Feature Presentation #6, Jun 1950), Victor Fox took a break from the company's usual bondage and bestiality fare.

ferent standards of judgment, nicely articulate the layers of meaning in the story.

The adaptation pulls no punches on the ending, carnage and desolation full of mythic potency as Ahab's enormous will pits itself against the size and strength of the "great white whale of death". All in all, it's a pretty impressive capturing of the spirit of the novel.

© NLA BOARD PUBL

The pirate epic Captain Blood (Fast Fiction #2, Nov 1949) was illustrated by H.C. Kiefer and featured a glorious wraparound cover.

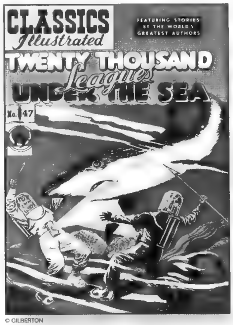
"20,000 Leagues Under the Sea" is Jules Verne's masterpiece from 1869, and the 1948 *Classics Illustrated* version ranks as one of H. C. Keifer's greatest achievements. Henry rose to the occasion and his style really added to the narrative, with a combination of big panels that render a peak moment in frozen clarity and action scenes that flow across and down the page.

The story begins in 1866 off the coast of Australia, where a "sea serpent" is terrorizing the shipping lanes. When the "creature" attacks a boatload of investigators–three of the boat's crew find themselves stranded upon the monster's back–which they discover is made of steel. A hatch opens and several armed men emerge and escort them below

They find themselves aboard the sleek needle-spurred submarine Nautilus, the creation of the aloof and mysterious Captain Nemo. The three, a professor of undersea life, his assistant, and a whaler who's a master harpooner, realize that–while submerged–escape is impossible; so they try to get along with the captain–who is in self-imposed exile from society. They go on a hunt in an undersea forest (with guns that shoot electrically-charged glass bullets), and later stroll through the pearl beds off the coast of Ceylon. In the pearl beds Nemo sees a native diver get attacked by a shark. The captain rushes to his aid, but is threatened himself and the harpooner ends up saving Nemo's life by spearing the shark.

Then Nemo announces his plan to travel underwater to the South Pole. They attain this fantastic destination, but soon find themselves in freezing shallows that threaten to ice over while the Nautilus is still submerged. They get stuck, and with their limited air supply, will die if they can't break free. Nemo contrives a strategy of pumping out hot water to loosen the ship enough that it can ram itself through, and they win free and head up the coast of South America. They run into a school of giant octopi, one of which gets tangled in the propeller, and they must venture out and fight the beasts off before they can get to the stern and fix the prop. This is an extraordinary scene and a good time to leave the fates of Nemo and the others to those who know or want to seek them out–through the novel, through the *Classic* comic (Kiefer contributes a prize panel near the end–a gorgeous full-pager of Atlantis!), or through the wonderful Walt Disney film version from 1954 that updated Nemo's secret "electrical" power source to atomic energy.

The Classics Illustrated version of "20,000 Leagues Under the Sea" originally gave the four-color treatment to Jules Verne's pioneering 1869 science fiction novel in 1948. The edition pictured here is the third printing (Dec 1950).



© GILBERTON

Since Seaboard reissued "Captain Blood" in September, 1950 as #2 in their *Famous Authors Illustrated* series, our three classic sea novel adaptations were all available within a six-month span that year. 1950 was also when Hillman started their *Pirates* series and Quality converted *Kid Eternity* to *Buccaneers*–helping make that year a "high water mark" for both original sea stories and adaptations. ■

Patriotic Heroes... the red white & blue of WWII

Shining brightly... and burning out quickly!

By Michelle Nolan

Have you ever seen a chronological listing of the Golden Age patriotic superheroes? No? Neither had I, so I created one. I was surprised by the results. I think you will be, too!

For starters, did you know that more than three quarters of the patriotic heroes–and nearly all the successful ones–were created before the attack on Pearl Harbor catapulted the United States into World War II?

That's right... only a handful of patriotic heroes were created after December 7, 1941. It's heretofore a largely unexamined example of yet another glut in the glut-filled history of comics. In fact, it's somewhat similar to the "Love Glut" that hurt romance comics in 1950.

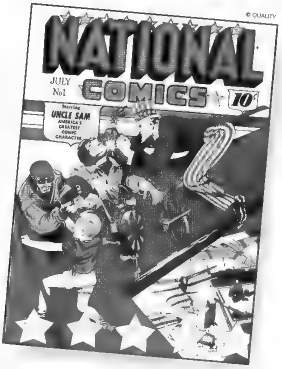
Using data I have collected over the years, along with the marvelous work of Howard Keltner and Jerry Bails, I identified 61 clearly patriotic/symbolic heroes created before and during World War II. The accompanying chart lists them, along with the months and issues of their debuts.

Of course, nearly all comic book heroes, superpowered or otherwise, could be called "patriotic heroes" during the war, for virtually all of them fought enemies of the United States, either on the battlefront or the homefront. But I think most of us can agree on what defines a "patriotic superhero": a character with special powers and abilities (super or otherwise) who wears a costume that makes him or her a living embodiment of patriotism.

Patriotic heroes range from the most obvious–Captain America and The Shield–to characters with shadings a bit more subtle, such as The Unknown Soldier and Pat Parker, War Nurse.

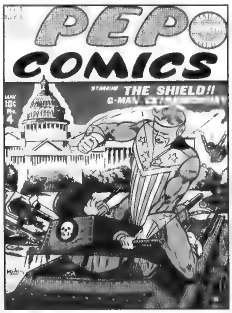
Their costumes and many of their names, of course, dated them badly after the war ended in 1945. In fact, people in the United States were so sick of war and talk of war that I believe this contributed to the quick demise of most of these heroes.

My motivation to investigate WWII history is helped by the fact that my college major degree was in U.S. history/sociology... but it is my family history that really makes my interest in the topic keen. You see, my father was an officer in the Navy and survived the attack on Pearl Harbor. He was one of the first presidents of a San Francisco Bay Area chapter of the Pearl Harbor Survivors Association when it was formed around 1960.



National #1 (Jul 1940) introduced Uncle Sam and his boy sidekick, Buddy, by Will Eisner.

Right up until he passed away five years ago, my father used to take an interest in the patriotic hero comics I would show him,



Shield vs. tank in the shadow of the Capital Dome on the cover of Pep #4 (May 1940).

especially the "Remember Pearl Harbor" issues (which I will discuss in a future column). He even recalled reading a few of them, although he was already out of high school by the time Superman first appeared in 1938.

I have vivid memories, indeed of the look that came into Dad's eyes when I showed him certain issues. Pearl Harbor was very hard on him, like everyone else–a close friend died before his eyes–although he did get one big break: His request to be transferred to the ill-fated battleship Arizona was denied two weeks before that infamous morning! And I'll never forget how he related his memory of throwing an orange at a Japanese warplane in rage and helpless frustration as he raced to help in the fight during the initial moments of the attack.

At any rate, I might have missed one or two patriotic superheroes, and you might consider a couple of others in that category that I don't. But I feel the list is pretty all-inclusive. Of the 61 superheroes and heroines listed, fully 47 were on the stands well before Pearl Harbor! These range from the first patriotic heroes (The Shield, who debuted in *Pep Comics* #1 dated January 1940) to the last ones to hit the stands before the attack on Pearl Harbor (V-Man in two Fox titles dated January 1942 along with the short-lived Citizen V in *Daring Mystery* #8, also January 1942).

At first, I was startled by this. Of course, in historical hindsight–and even in the minds of many people who were writing in the 1938-41 period including comic book writers–it was apparent the United States would be pushed into the conflagration sooner or later, especially after Dunkirk in England and the increasingly aggressive Japanese military actions in Asia. Even so, it was surprising to see how many patriotic heroes were created well before the United States declared war on the Axis powers.

It was also interesting to discover that so many patriotic heroes debuted in issues dated August, 1941. These comics were on the stands at least six months before Pearl Harbor! No fewer than 13 patriotic heroes made their bows in August, 1941 comics–the same number that had been created until that month!

It's also intriguing to note that only 16 patriotic heroes lasted after the end of World War II, and most of the others disappeared well before Japan surrendered in August, 1945. By 1949, only two patriotic heroes remained–Captain America and the Old Glory (Feature #42, first patriotic heroine)

CBM CHECKLIST

CHRONOLOGY OF THE PATRIOTIC SUPERHERO

With first app. issues:

1940

Jan - Shield (Pep #1)

Jul - Uncle Sam (National #1)

1941

Feb - Minuteman (Master #11); Mr. America (Action #33, formerly Tex Thompson, becomes Americommando with #52)

Mar - Captain America (Captain America #1); U.S.A. The Spirit of

Spr - The Patriot (Human Torch #4)

Apr - Captain Daring (Daring Mystery #7)

May - Captain Battle (Silver Streak #10); Capt. Freedom (Speed #13); Pat Parker, War Nurse (Speed #13)

Jun - Man of War (Liberty Scouts #2, first issue)

Jul - The Eagle (Eagle #1, character changed costume and emphasis from previous Fox appearances in Science and Weird Comics)

Aug - U.S. Jones (Wonderworld #28); The Spirit of '76 (Pocket #1); The Sentinel (Liberty Scouts #3), The Defender (USA #1); Mr Liberty (USA #1, later Major Liberty); The American Crusader (Thrilling #19); Pat Patriot (Daredevil #2); The Unknown Soldier (Our Flag #1); Captain Victory (Our Flag #1); Miss Victory (Captain Fearless #1), The Conqueror (Victory #1), Yank & Doodle (Prize #13); Citizen Smith (Captain Fearless #1)

Sep - Fighting Yank (Startling #10); The Stars & Stripes (Stars and Stripes #4, first issue), Captain Flag (Blue Ribbon #16); Yankee Doodle Jones (Yankee #1); The Scarlet Sentry (Yankee #1); Captain Courageous (Banner #3, first issue); The Lone Warrior (Banner #3)

Oct - The Star Spangled Kid (Star Spangled #1); Super American (Fight #15); Rangers of Freedom (Rangers #1); Major Victory (Dynamic #1), The Flag (Our Flag #2)

Nov - Yankee Boy (Yankee #2), Johnny Rebel (Yankee #2)

Dec - Wonder Woman (All-Star #8); Stormy Foster, the Great Defender (Hit #18), Captain Fight (Fight #16); The Liberator (Exciting #15), Flagman and Rusty (Captain Aero #1)

1942

Jan - V-Man (V . Comics #1 and Big Three #7); Citizen V (Daring Mystery #8)

Apr - The Secret Stamp (Captain America #13)

Fighting Yank–and they were on their last legs that year, barely lasting out the tumultuous decade of the '40s.

When The Shield appeared from MLJ Comics at the beginning of 1940 in *Pep Comics* #1, he was truly an original character. But, when Great Britain and France were plunged into World War II on September 3, 1939, it provided much-needed story angles for writers of the superhero genre, which was then in its infancy.

When Uncle Sam came along in *National Comics* #1 (July 1940) from Quality, he was another American comic book original, although obviously based on the famed character in the World War I recruiting posters created by artist James Montgomery Flagg (a great name freak if there ever was one!)

There were no other overtly patriotic superheroes created in 1940 during the deluge of heroes that gave us Captain Marvel, The Flash, Green Lantern and many, many others that memorable year. But in 1941, a couple of patriotic heroes began to appear every month, beginning with Minuteman in *Master Comics* #11 and Mr. America in *Action Comics* #53, both dated February. Captain America followed in March, and what made him so original was that he was the first patriotic hero to debut not in an anthology title, but in his own comic. Timely Comics must have been confident, indeed, in the genius of Joe Simon and Jack Kirby to give their creation his own title right out of the shoot! (Pun fully intended!)

Jul - The War Eagle (Crime Does Not Pay #22, first issue); Phantom Eagle (Wow #6); Commando Yank (Wow #6)

Aug - Captain Commando (Pep #30)

Sep - The Red Cross (Captain Aero #8 which is Vol 2, #2)

Oct - The American Eagle and Eaglet (Exciting #22)

Jan - Captain Jack Commando (Red Dragon #5, first issue); Minuteman (Red Dragon #5)

1942-43

Wint - Liberty Belle (Boy Commandos #1)

1943

Aug - Airmale (Prize #34)

Fall - Captain Battle Junior (Captain Battle Junior #1)

Nov - Miss America (Marvel Mystery #49)

1944

(no dates) – Captain V and The Puppeteer in various Fox giants (these are the same character and are also basically same character as Fox's earlier V Man)

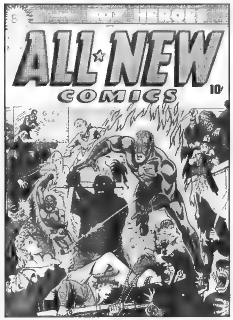
(no date) – Captain Valiant (Variety #1)

There was another historic debut in that same March. Quality Comics produced the first superheroine–USA, the Spirit of Old Glory, a short, beautifully rendered strip that appeared only in *Feature Comics* #42-48. But by the end of the year, no fewer than four other star-spangled heroines appeared–Pat Parker in *Speed Comics*, Pat Patriot in *Daredevil*, Miss Victory in *Captain Aero*, and Wonder Woman in *All-Star* #8 (December 1941) and *Sensation Comics* #1 (the next month).

Wonder Woman soon traded her star-spangled mini-skirt for the costume she wore for many years to come. But there was no doubt that–at first anyway–she belonged to the star-spangled brigade, right down to her work as Diana Prince at military intelligence. Wonder Woman was the creation of a world at war, but, unlike all the other characters, she survived with significant changes and better economic and editorial support.

An exhaustive review of the patriotic heroes and heroines is beyond the scope of this article, and much has been written on

The Flag is the ultimate symbolic hero yet the Ace Comics' title only lasted five issues. The Flag's debut (drawn by Jim Mooney) is pictured on the cover of #2 (Oct 1941), clearly fighting the Nazis, several months before the U.S. entered the fight against Hitler!



Red Blazer & Sparky and The Boy Heroes take on the Nazi's on Schomburg's classic cover to All New #8 (May 1944).

the subject. But if you haven't seen the new book *The Great Women Super Heroes* by Trina Robbins, I highly recommend it for information you may never have seen anywhere else. I don't usually give too much in the way of story recaps or character details in these columns, but this book covers anything and everything you might want to know about all the eras of heroic females.

In the six-month period between July and December 1941, the number of patriotic superheroes increased from 13 to a whopping 45 by December! That means no fewer than 32 star-spangled types first appeared in the five months between August and December.

By the time Pearl Harbor was attacked and the war began for the United States, the comic book market had become patriotically glutted! Not just with patriotic heroes, but with heroes of all sorts. And, as the year-by-year databases created by Southern California indexer Dan Stevenson demonstrates, the comic book market went from 695 issues in 1940 (give or take one or two that may not exist) to 839 issues in 1941, and 934 in 1942.

There was only room for so many patriotic heroes (and, of course, wartime rationing and comic book creators' service duty soon interfered as well). They were pretty much all the same except for Wonder Woman and Captain America, who were done in so much more depth.

Interestingly, the only new patriotic hero published in the first six months of 1942–when times were grim, indeed, as Americans faced an uncertain and as yet unpromising future–was The Secret Stamp! This character, a patriotic youngster created to plug war bonds and stamps, began a 15-issue run in *Captain America* #13, the famed "All Out for America" issue, and finished in *USA* #7-9. If you've never seen *Cap* #13, check out the spectacular symbolic cover by the underrated Timely artist Al Avison. It's my favorite issue of *Cap*!

Only a few more patriotic heroes remained to be created after mid-1942, and many of them already had disappeared early in 1942 with the closure of the Fox and Chesler comic houses (both temporarily) and Centaur (for good). At the same time, action–and sex-oriented Fiction House abandoned its brief experiment with Super American and Captain Fight in *Fight Comics* and with the patriotic boy team Rangers of Freedom in *Rangers Comics*.

Most of the patriotic heroes made at least two or three appearances, but one of the most interesting is the seldom seen one-shot hero The War Eagle, who appeared in the historic first issue of *Crime Does Not Pay* (and was later reprinted in another Lev Gleason giant title). That issue, #22 dated July 1942 is most noteworthy as the first true crime comic book, but The War Eagle makes it that much more collectible. It's one of the true sleepers! Typical of all Gleason titles, the story has a lot more meat than most superhero tales of the period.

Fawcett created two long-running patriotic characters, Phantom Eagle and Commando Yank, for that company's new *Wow Comics*. They debuted in #6 (July 1942) and ran for about six years each, with both outlasting the more worthy Mary Marvel in that title (for reasons I will never understand and can't begin to explain). In fact, the longevity of both of those characters is one of the major mysteries in comics history!

Interestingly, Nedor (Standard) tried hard with one last patriotic hero, The American Eagle–hard enough to knock The Black Terror off the cover of *Exciting Comics* for one issue when The American Eagle debuted in #22 (October 1942). But even though The American Eagle flew on the inside pages until 1946, The Black Terror was back on the cover the next issue and for many issues thereafter. That *Continued on page 17*

Part of the origin story of seldom seen hero The War Eagle from Crime Does Not Pay #22 (Jul 1942, the first issue). He never appeared again. Note that in the upper left panel, The War Eagle's career supposedly started in 1929–nearly a decade before Superman became the first genuine superhero in comic books!

CBM CHECKLIST

PATRIOTIC SURVIVORS

The Patriotic Survivors World War II patriotic heroes who lasted into 1946 and beyond on a regular basis, with their last Golden Age appearances:

Wonder Woman (survived by quickly changing emphasis)
Captain America (Captain America #74, Oct 1949)
The Fighting Yank (Fighting Yank #29, Aug 1949)
Phantom Eagle (Wow #69, Fall 1948)
Star Spangled Kid (Star Spangled #86, Nov 1948)
Miss America (Marvel Mystery #85, Feb 1948, and Sun Girl #1, Aug 1948)
Commando Yank (Wow #64, Mar 1948)
Yank & Doodle (Prize #68, Feb/Mar 1948)
The Shield (Pep #65, Jan 1948)
The Spirit of '76 (Green Hornet #37, Dec 1947-Jan 1948)
Liberty Belle (Star Spangled #68, May 1947)
Captain Freedom (Speed #44, Jan/Feb 1947)
American Eagle (Exciting #50, Aug 1946, and Fighting Yank #18, Nov 1946)
Miss Victory (Captain Aero #26, Aug 1946)
The Patriot (Marvel Mystery #74, Jul 1946)
Captain Commando (Pep #56, Mar 1946)
The Red Cross (Captain Aero #25, Feb 1946)

CRIME DOES NOT PAY
THERE WAS INDEED SOMETHING BILL REED COULD DO FOR HUMANITY...IN THE EVENTFUL YEARS TO FOLLOW.....BRAZEN CRIMINALS FELT THE TOUCH OF FEAR AND TERROR...A STARTLED NATION SHOUTED QUESTIONS....WHO WAS THIS WINGED FIGURE OF DOOM THAT PURGED THE COUNTRY OF EVIL? HIS NAME OR BACKGROUND NONE KNEW, BUT EVEN THE LOWLIEST PAVEMENT VAGABOND SOON LEARNED TO CALL HIM, THE WAR EAGLE...
1929...THE ERA OF ILLEGAL ALCOHOL AND GANG WARS STARTS THE WAR EAGLE'S MOMENTOUS CAREER....
1932
PUBLIC ENEMIES ROUNDED UP BY WEIRD, WINGED CRIME FIGHTER....
1936
BOND THIEVES LOSE BATTLE WITH THE WAR EAGLE....
DAILY EXPRESS
STRANGE FIGURE SWOOPS DOWN ON HI-JACKERS
MAN FROM SKIES APPEARS AGAIN-FOILS ROBBERY!
1941 WAR EAGLE SEEN AT LINER EXPLOSION SCENE....
SABOTAGE
1942
5¢
The Tabloid
5¢
DARING RESCUE AT SEA BY WAR EAGLE
WAR EAGLE RESCUES SURVIVORS OF TORPEDOED SHIP
5

U.S. Jones #1 (Nov 1941) from Fox is among the scarcer Golden Age superhero comics. The cover blurb has him clearly fighting the Nazis well before the U.S. entered the war. Compare the crude the cover art to the much slicker work of Alex Schomburg that was published by other companies.

remains a truly strange editorial decision–The Black Terror appeared on the cover of every issue of *Exciting* from #9-55 except for #22 and then #53, which featured the short-lived Miss Masque. It's oddities like this that make being a comic historian so much fun.

After The American Eagle, who was the last long-running patriotic superhero, the only two super patriots who succeeded were both women! Perhaps they struck readers as being original in their day, since so few other fighting females were on the stands in 1943, but both DC's Liberty Belle and Timely's Miss America enjoyed a good run as backup features. Those wonderful names doubtless contributed to their success.

Liberty Belle, DC's answer to popular actress Veronica Lake, ran in *Star Spangled Comics* #20 (May 1943) through #68 (May 1947), plus the first two issues of *Boy Commandos* (Winter 1942-43 & Spring 1943). I have always loved that name Liberty Belle–it's one of the most original of the Golden Age.

Likewise, Miss America ran in *Marvel Mystery* #49 (November 1943) through #85 (February 1948) and appeared in a few other Timely titles as well. Check out the first issue of her own title (1944), which with #2 became primarily a girls' comic similar to *Calling All Girls* and featuring the debut of Patsy Walker. That first issue has a knockout gorgeous cover! It's my second favorite Timely issue behind *Captain America* #13.

Other than Wonder Woman, of the patriotic heroes who received their own titles (some of which were still basically anthologies), only Captain America really succeeded, in one of the first of so many examples of the creative genius of the S&K team. *Fighting Yank* from Nedor ran 29 issues over seven years, but none of the other 10 single character titles ran more than eight issues.

The patriotic heroes are fun to peruse and collect, not because of the art or stories–which are, for the most part, less than memorable at best although bursting with raw energy–but because they are marvelous period pieces. They are an evocative reminder of a world gone forever. That world, of course, was nowhere near as simplistically patriotic as the comics would suggest, but nevertheless it was radically different from today's world. Any Golden Age comic collection is incomplete without at least a few members of our country's star-spangled brigade! ■

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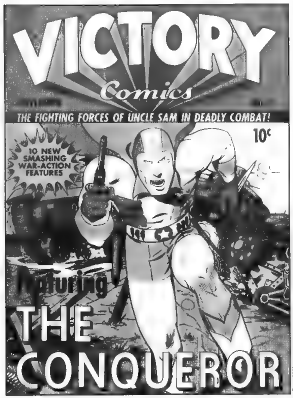
Michelle Nolan is a nationally recognized collector and researcher of comic books from the '40s through the '60s. In real life, Michelle works as a freelance journalist.



Victory Comics #3 (Nov 1941) from Hillman gave a big buildup to The Conqueror, but both he and the title lasted only four issues.

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Nick Ca

INTERVIEWERS NOTE: *As the following interview will show, Nick Cardy is a true original. His amazing career includes tenure at Will Eisner's comic book studio in the late 1930s, a colorful military career in WWII, work at Fiction House in the 1940s and on the Tarzan daily newspaper strip, and a 20 plus year association with DC Comics. During it all, Nick (a self-proclaimed "recluse") has been one of the most respected artists in comics, yet amazingly... he never realized it! I'm very proud to be a part of Nick Cardy's very first comic industry-related interview... and a* CBM *exclusive!*

JOHN COATES: *How old were you when you first became interested in art?*

NICK CARDY: I started wood carving, sculpting, and drawing at the age of six. When I was in junior high, I painted a 4x8 mural which was later printed in the *New York Herald Tribune* newspaper. Also, several of my murals were printed in the *Literary Digest*. In the evenings after school, I would attend free art classes at the Boys' Club. The instructors were professionals who donated their time. I studied under two well-known sculptors and a painter. One of the sculptors, Antonio Salemmi, had me visit his studio in Washington Square quite often. He was also an instructor at the Art Student League. He was very influential in my early work.

JOHN: *Who were some of your artistic inspirations?*

NICK: While at junior high, my art teacher gave me a huge book on the history of art, which had color illustrations. It opened a whole new world to me; Michaelangelo, Da Vinci, Rafael, Van Dyck, etc. As the years went by, the Impressionists gave me new insight, especially Degas, Monet, and Lautrec. I would also go to the Metropolitan Museum of Art every chance I could get, to sketch and analyze the paintings.

Originally, I wanted to be an illustrator. In those days, the magazines were loaded with illustrations, not photos. I would clip out and save as many as I could. I still have most of the clippings. My favorite illustrators were John Lagatta, John Gannon, Earl Blossom, Al Dorne, Coby Whitmore, Walter Biggs, and a few others. Their work greatly influenced my line work. Especially Roby Fawcett, and David Stone-Martin. Noel Sickle's later *Readers Digest* work with felt pens was also an influence.

JOHN: *Did you attend art school after high school?*

NICK: Not really an art school, per se. I attended the School of Industrial Art, a public school, where I won a gold medal for the best art student, the St. Gaudens medal. Al Plastino and I attended the school and did a very large mural. I remember he did the figures and I did the heads. This was about 1937, and I was about 18 years old.

I then took an apprentice job with an advertising agency. Being in a poor family during the Depression, our family needed us to work to survive. At the Agency I was a scrub boy, errand boy, messenger, etc. But it was a good experience because I got to watch all these illustrators at work. I remember this painter there named Weaver

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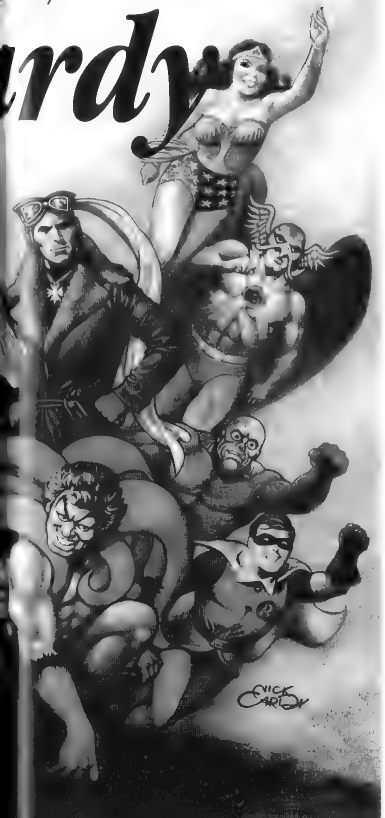
Interviewed
by John Coates

rdy



who worked in water colors and I thought his work was fantastic. One honor I had was when he asked me to carry three of his paintings to an exhibit. I was carrying them like they were gold! [*Laughter*] Interestingly enough, years later I saw his paintings again and they were not as good as I remembered. Maybe I improved, who knows?

JOHN: *When did you get into comics?*

NICK: About 1939 with the Eisner/Iger Studio. I'll never forget my first day. Jerry Iger says, "Look, we don't have any taborets for you yet but we're expecting some in. Until then, go down to the corner grocery, grab some orange crates and use those as your table". It didn't take long to find out that all the other artists had orange crates, as well! [*Laughter*] The taborets never came… but we worked it out.

JOHN: *What was Jerry Iger like?*

NICK: Jerry was a short, slight man. I always felt that there was a low growl as he walked around the bullpen. Every now and then he would parade these tall gorgeous women among us, his minions! [*Laughter*]

As far as money, Jerry held onto it. One day, Jerry took me aside, whispered with a satisfied smile, and said that he had a surprise for me in my next pay envelope. I was pretty excited but it turned out to be only an 18¢ raise! [*Laughter*]

Jerry used to get a kick out of annoying the artists. Our studio had these cement floors, with all these drawing tables close together. Sometimes, when all the artists were busy concentrating on their assignment, Jerry had a habit of picking up this metal trash can and dropping it to the floor! Made a heck of a bang and scared the living daylights out of us. You might be working on a deadline, spill ink on the page, or have to redraw the line. Jerry would just laugh and laugh. He's your boss, what are you going to say?

Art Saff got back at him, though. Once Jerry was taking an afternoon nap and Artie tossed a wad of firecrackers into his office. That woke him up! [*Laughter*] Can I tell a story related to my days at Eisner/Iger?

JOHN: *Please do…*

NICK: Earlier, when I was a teenager in the Boys' Club, we had done these paintings and they were going to be displayed. At the time, the Boys' Club had rented this store on 5th Avenue near the Plaza Hotel to display the work. A few local celebrities would attend to support the cause, as well. Anyway, I was sitting in the store window drawing, with my back to the window, which faced the street. I had thought the people in the store were watching me draw, but when I turned around, there was Gary Cooper on the street looking over my shoulder, watching me draw through the window! He had been watching me draw, was smiling, and indicated that he liked my work. Before I could acknowledge him, one of the debutantes that was in the store posing for us called out his name. All the girls ran out to meet him, but he had disappeared. That was that.

Years later, I was going to work at Eisner/Iger's and rang for the elevator and who is there but Gary Cooper! I mentioned that I was the little boy he had been watching draw, etc... never expecting him to remember. He said, "Yeah, you're the kid in the window". I was amazed he had remembered! We chatted and I found out he liked to draw and especially liked cartooning. He asked that I write him and proceeded to give me his address. About this time, the elevator doors opened to my studio floor. Waiting for the elevator were a group of

people from the studio going to lunch, including two girls who had always overlooked me because I was just a kid. Everyone sees him giving me his address, us talking like old pals, and shaking hands! I'll never forget how their jaws dropped! [*Laughter*] I can tell you that I floated right past them! [*Laughter*]

Young and dapper infantrymen Nick Cardy circa 1943.

JOHN: *And Will Eisner?*

NICK: Bill was totally different than Jerry… a gentleman and a creative genius. He was a master in dramatic lighting. I believe we were both very much influenced by John Ford's movie direction and other directors of that era. I liked Bill even after I had left the studio. He was very friendly, very tolerant, and patient with me. Being very busy, he sometimes seemed aloof, but he wasn't.

JOHN: *Was Eisner like a mentor?*

NICK: In a way, yes. Bill was the best. He had exceptional ability for story telling. His suspense, pacing, and impact gripped your attention. In that he had no peers. For me, this was a learning process that helped me to tell a better story, just knowing how to draw was only a small part. In those days, publishers very seldom praised your work, you see. If they did, they might think you'd ask for a raise! [*Laughter*] They also never liked you to sign your work.

JOHN: *Why wouldn't they let you sign your work?*

NICK: The publisher didn't want the artist to get credit on a strip they owned the rights to. If you did sign your work, the publisher would either white out your name or block it out with lettering, or word balloons. To get around this, most artists would hide their name or initials in various places within the artwork itself. For instance, if someone asked you if you had done this work, you would have them look here or there for your initials. Once Bob Powell wrote a story wherein the characters were looking for the fabulous "Viscardy" diamond. That type of thing.

The famous Nick Cardy initialed "signature"

JOHN: *Who were some of the artists in the studio?*

NICK: In the Eisner/Iger studio there was Lou Fine, (who influenced most of the artists who saw his work, including Bill…) as well as George Tuska, Charlie Sultan, and a few others I can't remember. Later at Iger's studio, when Bill had moved on, there was Artie Saff, John Celardo, and a few others. Again, I can't remember them all.

JOHN: *Why do you think Lou Fine was so influential?*

NICK: Lou's lines were so fine, finer than a pin point. And the control he commanded over his lines was unmatched. He used to use a Japanese brush, one of the bamboo ones. I began to use one due to his influence. I think he influenced Bill, as well. Especially with action figures, like when someone was being struck, or someone was jumping. Lou was the master. For example, say a character hit someone and it was a powerful blow. The figure who was throwing the blow had almost both feet off the ground, the body almost like a straight line to the one being hit. It was not just someone standing still, it was body action, movement, perspective, the way the body twisted, the muscles of the body, and the way the muscles were underplayed. Hal Foster had the same technique with underplaying the muscles. Also, I thought Bill's work was never quite as polished as Lou's. To compare, I felt Lou was more polished, but Bill had more impact in his pages with less lines and more black.

JOHN: *And George Tuska?*

NICK: George Tuska was a gentle giant. He was this man's man; Big build, wavy hair, chiseled features, strikingly handsome. If you wanted to draw a leading man for a movie, George was it! I remember a friend told me a story about George while they both worked at Chesler's studio. Evidently, there was another artist, a real braggart, very cocky, always lifting weighs, etc. Since George had a big build, this guy would always prod him, goad him on. George was always quiet and would shrug it off. Well, the guy went too far one day because George just stood up from his drawing table, and without saying a word, walked over and popped him! Right? George then calmly walked back to his table and started drawing again as if nothing had happened! [*Laughter*]

In the mean time, George's punch had driven this guy back about three drawing tables over, flat on his back. This was typical of George. A very gentle guy but you push him too much and wham! George and I later worked together again on a Teen Titans issue where I inked his pencils in the late 1960s.

JOHN: *Charles Sultan?*

NICK: He was nice but very quiet. He had these big heavy eyebrows and his eyes were always very active. I remember that when the script called for a car to be drawn, he would go to a newspaper, cut out a picture of one and paste it in the panel. He would then pencil in his figures around it. When I first saw the published work I thought, "Wow, this guy can really draw cars!". I was going to ask him how he did it, ask for pointers but then I found out! [*Laughter*]

JOHN: *And Art Saff?*

NICK: I knew Art very well. He was from Brooklyn–Irish, a real Jimmy Cagney type guy. He was cocky but I liked him for it. He always wore the loudest clothes, always in style, always the comic. Artie went to a lot of parties and was always the "life of the party". He always liked to create mayhem, for mayhem's sake. One weekend, we went to upstate New York to this resort. We finally enticed these two girls to dance with us, sit with us, etc. and Artie asked them if they would like their palms read. They stuck out their palms and Artie painted them red, you see! [*Laughter*] Very cornball, but it worked

because the girls liked us! Another time we were on the dock and he pushed me in the water. Always a practical joker. We had some good times together, but eventually we went our own ways. We later worked at Fiction House together. I think he married a girl from Fiction House. We also worked together at DC Comics in the late 1960s on a *Teen Titans*.

JOHN: *How did you begin doing "Lady Luck"?*

NICK: Bill [Eisner] gave it to me after Chuck Mazoujian, who was doing the Lady Luck section up to that point, had been drafted. Of course, Lady Luck was a section of *The Spirit* weekly. I took over Lady Luck and Bob Powell took over Mr. Mystic.

Bob Powell wrote some Lady Luck scripts, but mostly they were handled by me, as well as the artwork. I added a bit more humor into the strip, made it lighter in tone.

Other than that, my biggest contribution to the strip was that I created and introduced the supporting character, "Peecolo". In Italian, Peecolo means small or tiny. Since the character had a very large build, I wanted to give him a name like "tiny" but not that obvious.

Like I said earlier, I first worked in the studio. But with Lady Luck, we worked on the strip in Bill's two-room apartment. I can't remember when the transition occurred from the studio to working in Bill's apartment. I think Bill had split with Jerry but I really can't remember.

Anyway, Bill was in one room, and Bob Powell and I shared the other, with Tex Blaisdell dropping by occasionally. I'll never forget when I first saw the section [Lady Luck] in the newspaper. That really boosted my ego and pushed me to improve.

JOHN: *What was Bob Powell like?*

NICK: He was a very strong-willed fellow. I was the new kid eager to learn and full of questions about art, drawing, etc. It was a pat on the head type relationship. I was very grateful.

JOHN: *Why did you leave Eisner?*

NICK: I think I was asking for more money, I really can't remember. It was around 1942. I do remember that he was not too happy. Whatever the reason, for me to speak up about something or complain it must have been for a good reason. I left there for Fiction House.

JOHN: *How did you come to work at Fiction House?*

NICK: Weeks before I left Bill, I took in my samples and met the publisher, T. T. Scott. He was a tall sort of guy, looked like a Texan. He hired me because he thought I could draw women well. In my mind, every woman fit into a certain category. If I were drawing a woman who was aristocratic, I would look to classic lines like Ava Gardner or Grace

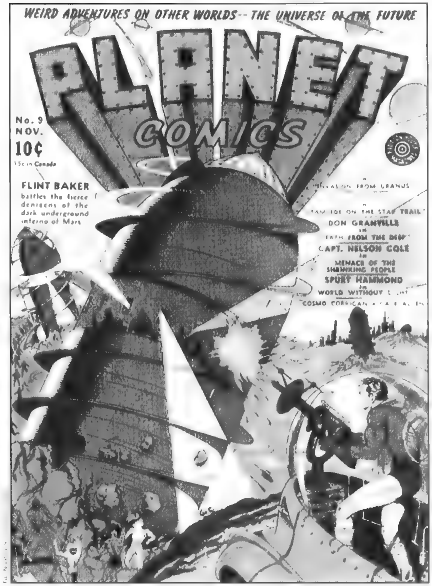
Lady Luck
NO ONE SUSPECTS THE MYSTERIOUS AND BEAUTIFUL LADY LUCK IS IN REALITY, BRENDA BANKS... A SOCIALLY PROMINENT DEBUTANTE WHO SECRETLY USES HER WEALTH TO FIGHT CRIME AND INJUSTICE...
Ford Davis
AT THE HOME OF BRENDA BANKS, A SLEEK LIMOUSINE PULLS UP AT THE ENTRANCE...
TAKE THE LUGGAGE AROUND TO THE BACK, CLARENCE...
YES SIR..
BRENDA DEAR!
SURPRISE!
MOTHER! DAD!!
OH, YOU DARLINGS.. I THOUGHT YOU WERE STILL IN SOUTH AMERICA... YOU MUST TELL ME ALL ABOUT YOUR ADVENTURES. YOU'VE BEEN GONE A YEAR, YOU KNOW...

Lady Luck splash by Nick Cardy from a 1941 Spirit section.

Kelly, that very straight aquiline nose. If it was a cute character, I would go with the turned up nose like a Susan Hayward. Fiction House always showcased beautiful women in their books.

JOHN: *What was your first work there?*

NICK: I worked on Senorita Rio in *Flight Comics*, Camilla



Flint Baker battles the fierce denizens of the dark underground inferno of Mars on Nick Cardy's early cover of Planet Comics #9 (Nov 1940).

of the Jungle and Ka'anga in *Jungle Comics*. I don't remember exactly, but I believe Bob Powell was there and did most of the Sheenas, and Arty Saff was there, as well. Same type of studio set up as with Eisner/Iger. With Senorita Rio, my line work was heavier than with Lady Luck… mostly because I didn't have access to the fine Japanese brushes Lou Fine used to use.

As a matter of fact, Senorita Rio has been recently reprinted by AC Comics, and a fan sent me a copy. My drawings are atrocious! [*Laughter*] I never knew how crude they were. It's tough to look back at them today!

JOHN: *Did you write Senorita Rio as well?*

NICK: No. I never wrote the scripts for any of my Fiction House work.

JOHN: *I think Lee Elias was there as well.*

NICK: Yes, he was. His work was very influenced by Milton Caniff.

JOHN: *And then you were drafted in 1943.*

NICK: Yes, on April 1st. April Fools' Day, no less [*Laughter*] I went overseas on an English ocean liner that had been converted into a troop ship. I remember we were alone with no military escort and kept zigzagging to avoid being lined up by the German submarines. At the time, had I and the other guys known about the subs we would have been scared! [*Laughter*] Prior to leaving the States, I had contracted pleurisy and spent the crossing being treated in the ship's hospital room. By the time we had docked in South Hampton, England, my pleurisy had gotten worse so I spent my first few months in England in the hospital. That hospital was a story unto itself.

JOHN: *Did you continue to draw while in the military?*

NICK: Yes. After being drafted, I was sent to the newly formed 66th Infantry Division at Camp Blanding in Florida. My drawing of a Black Panther was chosen as the Division shoulder patch and emblem, the Panther Division. It's still used today. Also, I had purchased about a dozen 4x6 spiral sketch pads, a Waterman fountain pen, and a small metal Sucrets box. I converted the Sucrets box into a watercolor box where I soldered a little holder on the bottom and put in these little watercolor cakes. I had a brush that I cut in half and put it in the box like a tube. I used to sketch all the time either on the spot or from memory and notes. If my line drawings needed a tone, I would wet my finger with spit and rub it over my ink line to make the ink bleed, thus creating a wash look. The watercolor was for special occasions only, though. I carried this in my duffel bag and continued to draw throughout my campaign in Europe.

JOHN: *Were you an infantryman?*

NICK: In the States, I was in the Infantry, but in Europe, I was a Sherman tank driver. Prior to being shipped overseas, I was excused from some duties to do portraits of my commanding General and some of his aides. A high ranking visiting General saw these drawings hanging in the Officer's Club and asked for me to be transferred to his command at Ft. Hood in Waco, Texas. Before I was transferred, my current General wanted to promote me to the next rank, Corporal. The problem was that the only Corporal's ranking available was in the motor pool. I never worked in the motor pool, just got "assigned" there on paper to get my promotion. Well, when I got to Ft. Hood, the base was very busy packing and getting ready to be shipped to the Pacific, and the Officer in Charge asked me who I was. When I announced "I'm the artist", he said "We don't need an artist! Can you letter pack crates and duffel bags?". I said "no", so they shipped me back to Florida. Thank goodness! [*Laughter*]

As it was, when I returned to Florida most of the 66th Division had already been sent to Europe. The only people left on base were those classified as essential personnel, so I was listed as excess personnel and shipped overseas. In England, when I was released from the hospital, my original unit was

already in combat so I was re-assigned in the 3rd Armored Division because of my motor pool ranking. This time my artistic talent hadn't done me any favors!

I remember while being interviewed by the 3rd Armored Division, the Officer in Charge says, "I see here from your records that you were in the motor pool, do you drive a tank?". I confessed I never saw a tank nor even drove a truck. I then went on to briefly explain how the motor pool record came about. He looked at me for a few moments, then pounded some stamp on my records and said, "You are now a tank driver!" [*Laughter*] I pictured myself with a tank as my coffin and that stamp on my records, as the nails!

I have to tell you that I didn't know how to drive the damn thing! The Army gave me this quick course, but it did not help. While learning to drive a tank on base, when I took corners, I would take half the building with me! The other driver and I made a deal that he would take the corners and I would drive if we were going straight! [*Laughter*]

JOHN: *Did you see much fighting?*

NICK: More than I cared for. As a spearhead division, we had penetrated the enemy so fast that we were far ahead of our supplies. This happened once, and the Germans closed in behind us. They then ambushed us and killed our Division Commander, General Rose. Another time, while speeding into a town deep behind German lines, we were ambushed with bazookas by an SS elite squad. Many of our tanks were disabled, and the infantrymen who were riding our tank had gotten blown off the back. My tank commander, who had his head sticking out of the turret, had it blown off by a bazooka. We wanted to get out of the tank but were pinned down because the Germans had a habit of shooting at a disabled tank's hatches. Luckily, we eventually got out.

There was this one time that illustrates my luck with tanks on the battlefield while we were outside Cologne. Throughout the war, my tank always had trouble shifting into second gear. While driving across an open field toward Cologne, the Germans suddenly turned their 88 guns against us. These 88s were so powerful that their shell could go through three Sherman tanks and bounce around in the fourth. To get under cover, we had to drive our tanks through a deep ravine. At the bottom of the ravine, you had to quickly shift the tank into second gear to keep the momentum going so the tank could go up the other side and not get stuck at the bottom. Well, three of our tanks were already hit, and I knew the German Panzers had a bead on my tank. I drive down this ravine, pop the clutch at the bottom to put it into second gear...and nothing! I'm stuck at the bottom of the ravine, nose down, unable to turn the turret and cannon to defend myself.

From behind, I heard the grass next to my tank cut up like someone had taken a giant scythe and cut the land. I knew the Panzer had missed me but was loading up for another shot. I was a sitting target. I frantically got the tank into gear and out of the ravine. The Panzer must have gotten hit by one of our tanks because I never heard the second shot. Thank goodness! Later in the day when the battle was over I was cursing that tank, I tell you! [*Laughter*] I got out of that scrap and ended up with two purple hearts.

JOHN: *That's terrifying! Is it too personal to discuss your Purple Hearts?*

NICK: Not at all. One time was even funny. We were getting near Dessau, Germany, which is near Berlin. The American High Command had made a decision to stop our advance to Berlin and let the Russians take it. When we got to Dessau, I went to this outhouse in a field to do my business. While sitting in the outhouse, a German sniper shot me in the leg! [*Laughter*] Whats makes the story even funnier is that I didn't even know it. I remember sitting there and hearing something rattle around so I got out of there quick. Being outside, I thought it was a squirrel or a small animal running around in there. As I'm running away pulling my pants up I notice my boot is full of blood. I couldn't care less about the blood and had this grin on my face thinking, "I'm going home!". [*Laughter*] The body immunizes you from shock, I guess.

Another time, we had just liberated this town, and were relaxing, but there were still pockets of German resistance. I had left my tank and went into a bombed out building. As I walked in the bathroom, a German soldier walked in at the same time, from the other direction. We just stopped, looked at each other in shock, and ran in opposite directions! [*Laughter*]

JOHN: *Were you sent home after being injured?*

NICK: No. My second Purple Heart was from a shrapnel wound in my leg. When it originally occurred, I went to the medic tent but since there were guys a lot more in need than me, I said, "The heck with it", and frankly, forgot about it

Cardy's prehistoric epic on the cover of Jungle Comics #16 (Apr 1941).

Nick's rendition of the beautiful Sheena on the cover of Jumbo #52 (Jun 1943)

until after the war. Now, after the war, you would accumulate points for different things that were used to decide who would be sent home. While stationed in Germany, I was close to having enough points and remembered the shrapnel and reported it so they gave me another Purple Heart - more importantly, the points to go home! That's the only reason I reported it was to get home. Otherwise, I wouldn't have thought anything of it.

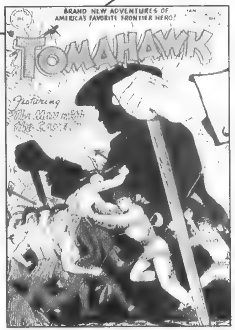
JOHN: *You had mentioned something about an art gallery in Paris, France showing your work?*

NICK: Yes. I was in a Belgian hospital when the war was declared over. A visiting Red Cross lady was interested in my drawings and commented; "What a talent!". Then with a grim expression on her face asked if she could borrow the sketches for several days. I said sure, cause I wasn't going anywhere. [*Laughter*] The next thing I knew I was transferred to the Information and Education Branch of the Army, stationed a few miles from Paris. The Red Cross person had set up an exhibit of my work in a Parisian gallery.

JOHN: *When did you get back to the States?*

NICK: I was discharged about 1946 and went back to New York City. There I rented space in a studio with Al Plastino and Jack Sparling, where I freelanced comic work and magazine illustrations. I did a wonderful western daily strip, Casey Ruggles, which was distributed by United Features, along with the Batman Daily, and a few others. Al Plastino was doing the Ferdinand strip. As I said earlier, Al and I went to the School of Industrial Art together, back in the late 1930s. Heck of a nice guy. Anyway, Al was an avid golfer and I can remember that he would talk about golf for hours.

This was about the time I became interested in Degas. I began reading about art theory, etc. and devoured books on design. I found out that through the simplicity of design you can do wonders. For example, with comic books, when you're selling them on the newsstand, you may have forty of fifty books up there visually competing with each other, so the cover must catch the eye. Simplicity is the only way to do this effectively through design. Some of the covers today are too busy. I realize the kids today like that, and in many ways I do too, but if you're going to sell it, the reader needs to be able to glance at it and tell what the heck it is. The cover has to grab you and say buy me, buy me!



Tarzan portrait done by Cardy for the newspaper strip and his novel cover for Tomahawk #21 (Jan 1954).

JOHN: *How did you get on the Tarzan strip?*

NICK: Well, Burne Hogarth was doing Tarzan dailies and Sundays at the time, liked my work, and offered me the strip full time. This was about 1948. I did the artwork for the dailies while Burne continued to write and draw the Sunday strip. I enjoyed working with him. Burne was a designer and would always fit his figures into the design. Because of this, his figures sometimes looked like sculptures that were ready to be placed in a monument. It's funny because United Features had a store room with stacks of Burne's original art work, but I was more interested in Hal Foster. I could have had all the Burne Hogarth I wanted! Collecting original art was the farthest thing from my mind then, and now.

JOHN: *What was the creative process with Tarzan dailies?*

NICK: The first panel reviewed what the last day showed, then the next two panels would move the story along, while the last panel set up a cliffhanger. Burne never laid out the panels. He left that up to the me. For example, his entire script would read "Tarzan is going into the valley, the second panel someone is hiding behind him, and the third they are fighting, the forth panel they fall off the cliff." In a way, it was very structured and confining, but that's the medium.

JOHN: *Did you find it rewarding?*

NICK: Very. At the time, newspaper strips were a step higher than comics. You were getting into the same level as Caniff, so it felt nice. The money was nice, too! [*Laughter*]

JOHN: *How long were you on Tarzan?*

NICK: From about 1948–1951.

JOHN: *Did you leave the newspaper strip all together?*

NICK: For the most part. Once I helped out Al Capp for a couple weeks on "Lil Abner" when one of his main assistants was in the hospital . I went up to his home in Boston which housed his studio. Al would do the main characters while his assistants did backgrounds. I did most of the figures. I remember he liked my work and asked me to draw him a picture of a woman and included this work in with my pay. Next thing I know, it shows up in the Jell-O ad. Al must have gotten a fortune for it! [*Laughter*] Oh well .

JOHN: *What was Al like?*

NICK: Al was quite a character and very friendly. He was very tolerant and patient with his artists, too. I don't know whether you know it but Al had an artificial leg. There's a funny story about him being in a London hotel. Once in his hotel room, Al was getting ready for bed, had taken off his pants, tossed them on the floor by the bedside, and called room service. Well, Al's artificial leg was still in his pant leg! By the time room service arrived, Al was already in bed. When the bellman came up to serve Al--and he was serious- the bellman asked Al if he wanted an extra glass for the guy under the bed! [*Laughter*]

JOHN: *When did you begin at DC?*

NICK: I began at DC around 1951. My first work was for Murray

Boltinoff, my editor, on a comic called *Gangbusters*. I did most of those. I was also the main artist on the *Tomahawk* series, did the art in all issues of *Congo Bill*, and *Legends of Daniel Boone* issues, as well as various romance and war stories. From this point on, I worked at DC uninterrupted until around late 1974, though I would continue to freelance some for other publishers.

JOHN: *Any comments about Congo Bill?*

NICK: Yes. The writer on the series had no conception of what animals do. He would write things like "the rhino was going to charge the zebra, because it's his favorite meat." Now, rhinos are herbivores, they don't eat meat. Or he'd write that "Congo Bill is riding a hyena because it's the fastest animal in the jungle." All these inconsistencies. Having worked on the Tarzan daily newspaper strip, I had done extensive research on jungle animals and wanted *Congo Bill* to have the same authenticity. For Tarzan, I went to the Museum of Natural History to see which monkey does what, etc. The same with *Congo Bill*. The writer would get so upset when I corrected him, but what can you do?

JOHN: *What was Murray Boltinoff like?*

NICK: As an editor, he was okay. I remember once Mike Sekowsky turned in a 24-page completed story only a week after having it assigned. Mike was very fast as a penciler and very good. Murray was furious and accused Mike of being sloppy, and trying to turn in sub-standard work. For the next story, Mike completed it in the same amount of time, but held the work for a few weeks before turning it in. When he brought it in, Murray said, "See, now that's much better!" [*Laughter*] Really shows the mentality of some of these guys. Every editor had a different approach, I guess.

JOHN: *You also worked for Mort Weisinger?*

NICK: No. Mort was mainly on the Superman family books and did promotional work. He was a friendly guy and I liked him, but he always looked like he was busy, ready to catch a bus or something, even when he was sitting down! [*Laughter*] When we spoke I always had the feeling that I was holding him up or the phone was ringing for him and he had to run.

JOHN: *You worked for Julius Schwartz too.*

NICK: Yes. Julie and I always got along fine. At first, you didn't know how to take Julie because he has this chopped humor, a Walter Mathau type. He was just putting you on, though. He was really a very nice person, very talented, and a darn good editor.

JOHN: *About this time, you changed your name from "Viscardi" to "Cardy". Why?*

NICK: I used to go to an adverting agency or comic house to show my work. Being Italian, the staff would say stuff like, "Oh, yeah, one of those guys that carries a dagger. Do you have a knife or something?", and so on–little snide remarks. They'd do the same if you were Jewish, Irish, Black, whatever. You know, I always noticed that when you go to a place that had a majority of a certain type of people, they would always pick on another group. Because of this, though I'm Italian, I hated to go into a room full of Italians because I don't want them to talk about this group or that group. This is America, you know? Even though I grew up in the ghetto, I never liked to be prejudiced. I'm just not a mean person.

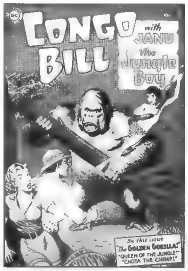
Anyway, this was the environment in comics and advertising at the time. I remember I used to get checks from employers where they would spell my name wrong; Piscardy, Miscardy, and so on. I could tell they were doing it on purpose because when I asked them to correct it, they would laugh, say they would, only to have it wrong again.

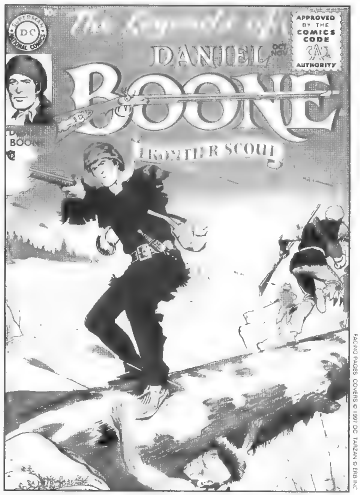
Also, in the early 1950s the U.S. Senate was holding hearings on the Mafia. A lot of innocent Italians were suffering because of it. Finally, I said, "Why the heck am I bothering with this?" So I legally changed my name to just "Cardy". This was a very difficult decision because I'm very proud of my family name and my Italian heritage. With advertising, I used the name "Cardi" with an "i."

JOHN: *About this time, Congressional hearings were also being held on what some thought was the gruesome content of some comics. The repercussions were that the industry as a whole became somewhat sanitized with regard to the content of comics. Were you affected by this?*

NICK: Not really. Comics at DC were always very wholesome. During my time in comics or newspaper strips, I never liked violence or believed

(*Continued on page 46*)

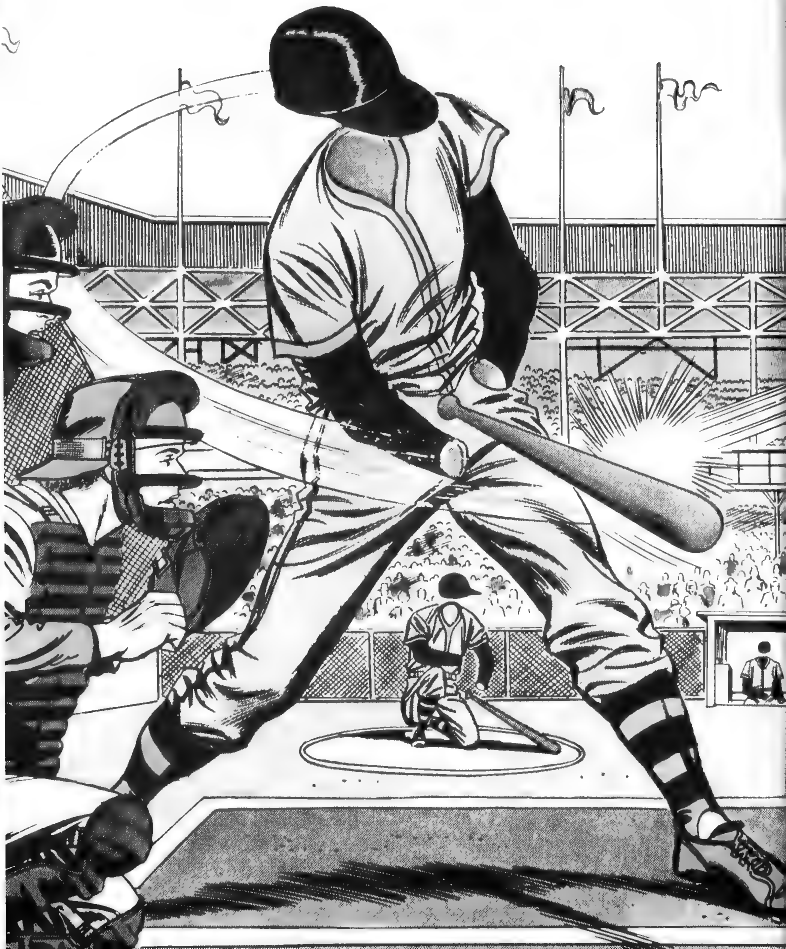




Two classic and highly collectible DC issues with early Nick Cardy covers – Congo Bill #1 (Aug/Sep 1954) and The Legends of Daniel Boone #1 (Oct/Nov 1955).

Photos courtesy © 1997 DC Comics & Nick Cardy

GREATEST GAMES IN THE GALAXY!



Strange Sports Stories

Brave & Bold's Sci-Fi Sports Sub-genre!

BY ROLF GERDAU

BRAVE AND BOLD
STRANGE SPORTS STORIES
12¢
THE MOST AMAZING WORLDS' SERIES AMONG THEIR PLANETS!
BRAVE AND BOLD
STRANGE SPORTS STORIES
THE MOST AMAZING RACE EVER HELD ON THE INDIANAPOLIS SPEEDWAY...
"The Man Who Raced Through Time!"
24

One of the most innovative and well done series of the Silver Age, has suffered as the "Rodney Dangerfield" of comic collecting. This is hard to explain, given the creative talent that went into its production. Strange Sports Stories was the only feature in *Brave & the Bold* or *Showcase* to be give five uninterrupted try-out issues. DC clearly wanted this series to be a winner and they pulled out all the stops as far as writing and art were concerned. Gardner Fox wrote all but three of the ten stories (John Broome turned out masterful efforts on those three) and all stories were penciled by Carmine Infantino who put his distinct method of using silhouettes in the captions, to great effect. As a letter writer pointed out in *B&B* #49–"Even while you read the captions, you can still keep up with the action."

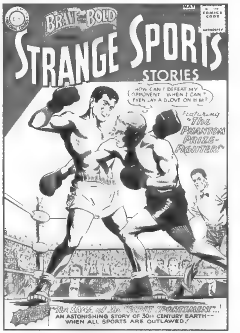
Murphy Anderson inked the second story in issue #47; Sid Greene inked the first story in issue #48; and Joe Giella inked the rest. Infantino really put a lot of effort and talent into this series. While other comics used a standard six to nine panel page, he used ten to twelve panels to produce a tremendous sense of action. The original art to these issues would truly be treasures to have. A sports comic would have to have had action… and Carmine created it wonderfully.

The covers to all five issues were classic teasers–"Why were the baseball players invisible?", "What is a turn-of-the-century automobile doing, racing in the Indy 500?" I had to have these comics!

In the first issue of the series (*Brave & the Bold* #45, January 1963) we

UNUSED TO CONTROLLING THIS "WILL TO WIN" THAT CIRCULATES THROUGH HIS ENTIRE BODY, OKKAN DOL SHOUTS OUT...
CAN YOU HEAR ME, EARTHMAN ? I-- OKKAN DOL-- HAVE BEATEN YOU-- ROBBED YOU OF YOUR UNIQUE ABILITY THAT GAVE YOU AN ADVANTAGE OVER ME-- YOUR WILL TO WIN !

Julie Schwartz and company turn boxing upside down in the cover story from B&B #47 (May 1963).


BRAVE AND THE BOLD
STRANGE SPORTS STORIES
"THE PHANTOM PHILE-FIGHTER"
"THE CASE OF THE MISSING MILLIONAIRS"!
AN ASTONISHING STORY OF 30th CENTURY EARTH--
WHEN ALL SPORTS ARE OUTLAWED!

An illustration of Infantino's silhouette captioning.

have, featured on the cover an invisible alien baseball team playing in the World Series (although this would make it the "Worlds Series", wouldn't it?) titled "Challenge of the Headless Baseball Team". This first story stretches the concept of making the premise integral to the story, but is an interesting and fast-paced fable, nonetheless. The last panel of page three, with the ball in mid-flight, is wonderful, and the little silhouette panels give this story plenty of action, which is remarkable given the limited action in a real baseball game. (An interesting aside is that the champion Earth team is named the New York Jets! Could this have been the inspiration for the future AFC football team name?) The second story concerns a sports wimp who, (in a nod to ACG unlikely hero stories) is transformed into a football "Goliath of the Gridiron". This issue possessed probably the best cover of the series, but also the weakest of the stories.

Issue #46 (March 1963) sported (Hee, hee... sorry, I couldn't resist!) a basketball cover entitled "The Hot-shot Hoopsters". In another unlikely hero saga, a group of five short, 14 year old geniuses, comes to the rescue of a virus-stricken college basketball team, on the brink of the championship game. The coach only agrees to use them after Thomas "Tightwad" Taggorts, the college's richest alumnus, offers $1,000,000 to see "brains versus brawn". The entire story is really an early look at bio-engineering. It is told and illustrated well, and the game itself is presented as fast-paced and dynamic as a Frank Miller Daredevil.

The second story concerns an all-planet golf tournament on Mars. Golf of the future is a very hazardous sport which involves evading rampaging "Dilars" on Saturn, and luring "Wignor Insects" out of their burrows on Jupiter [*Whew!*]. 24th century golfers are a breed apart, and know the meaning of "extreme sport"! Here, again, we have good stories and wonderful art.

The "Phantom Prize-Fighter" graces issue #47 (May 1963), and introduces the interesting story in which Paul "Socko" Chase proves he "had the heart, if not the name of a champion". It also features an alien with really neat hands! (And, wait a minute... in the upper right corner of page 13, isn't that the silhouette of a certain adamantium-clawed mutant?!... Nah, couldn't be.)

The second feature gets my vote for the best story of the series. Not only does it intelligently foresee the possible impact of virtual reality to the future of sports, but it features cool future sport ideas. In this instance, all sports are the featured theme and it is handled very well.

Car racing takes center stage on the cover of #48 (July 1963), which for the first time in the series, features a real sporting event–the Indy 500. This time travel story includes a lot of historical trivia tidbits, as 19th century automobile pioneer, Bill Slade, attempts to return to his own time, by participating in the 1964 Indy 500

A planetary decathlon is featured in the second story, "Duel of the Star Champions". The hammer throw, discus, and other Olympic event skills are used by the hero to not only win the "Planetathlon", but save the universe as well, exemplifying that "a will to win is not enough. A man must have a good reason for wanting to win!"

The final issue, #49 (September 1963), ends the five issue series, with the cover feature "Gorilla Wonders of the Diamond". [Good Lord...*Choke!*...Gorillas!–Not a good sign!] The saga opens with a mysterious gorilla baseball team beating up on an all-star team from the American and National League, on an army base in Turkey! The story is actually very good; probably one of the best DC gorilla stories ever! The reason that the gorillas choose to be a baseball team, in their quest for world dominion, is cleverly made integral to the story. (An interesting aside; a panel on page three shows a caveman in a deadly duel with a tiger or leopard, which has a horn growing out of its head!)

Although the gorillas were brought in, there is no let down as far as story or art quality.

The last story is a pretty standard sci-fi yarn that would fit into any of the DC sci-fi anthology comics. With a sport (in this case, weightless "Spaceball") being entirely invented for the tale, rather than adapting the story around a known sport. This is probably the direction Strange Sports would have had to go, if it had gone at all, which it didn't!

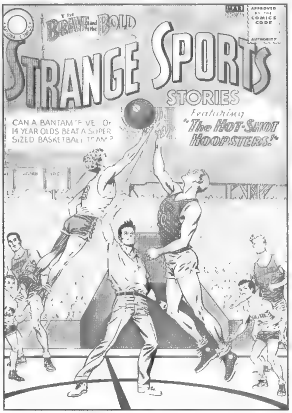
Great art, interesting, unique stories which exemplified all that was entertaining, educational, and morally uplifting in a comic series. Not a bad deal for 12¢!

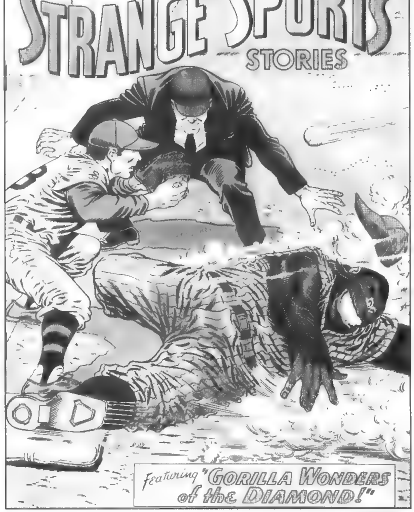
The editorial page in issue #45, explains how the combination of sports comics and sci-fi comics had never been tried before, and with the large following of both groups of fans, this comic should really take off. (Space/Western had already been tried, of course, as had War/Love. In fact, I'd guess that every possible combination of genres had been tried at one time or another in comic book history.. except, perhaps, [*chuckle*] western sport stories!... Hey, wait a minute! I could be onto something here!)

A weakness in this series was brought up by one perceptive fan in the first letter page, which stated, "In my opinion, I really don't think you'll be able to dream up enough different plots, gimmicks, and angles to warrant the publishing of such a book, without becoming rather..humdrum!" The last issue possibly bears him out. Not only is a sport repeated, so that the first and last issues both had a baseball theme; but the last even had to bring in those [*choke!*] DC gorillas!

I do have a different theory, however. When I was growing up, there was a rivalry between the sport jocks and the "wimps". The wimps were usually intimidated by organized sports or were frequently victimized when they participated--remember gym class? Jocks rarely read comics. There were certainly exceptions, but this was basically true where I grew up. By combining sci-fi with sports, DC attempted to appeal to both groups, but succeeded in appealing to neither. The athletic heroes of these fables could have been perceived as the very melon heads who gave the comic reader a "wedgy" on the basketball court, or a wet towel welt in the shower room.

I don't know the real reason this series failed to catch on, but it has aged very well and everyone can enjoy these under-appreciated treasures in these more enlightened times--even Shaquille O'Neill is a comic book enthusiast! I hope this article sparks your interest in these marvelous books. Get a cheap thrill before the speculators realize what quality productions these books are! ■


THE BRAVE and the BOLD
STRANGE SPORTS STORIES
Featuring "The HOT-SHOT HOOPSTERS!"
CAN A BANTAM-WEIGHT OF 14 YEAR OLDS BEAT A SUPER-SIZED BASKETBALL TEAM?



Brave & Bold #46's cover really tapped into the teenage male adolescent fantasies of that simpler era, and Brave & Bold #49 shows Julie playing the ace up his sleeve on the last issue--a gorilla cover (Mar/Sep 1963).

Rolf Gerdau has been an avid collector of ACG and DC Silver Age for the past 12 years. In "real life" Rolf is married and works for the post office in Nebraska.

Winslow Bicker from "Stormy Weathers".

The Irrepressible Spirit of Joe Shuster

By Pat S. Calhoun & Charlie Roberts

For me, the 1960s were the Golden Age of Golden Age collecting. I was young enough to appreciate the superhero books, and they were cheap enough ($3 to $5 for all but super keys) to collect for enjoyment. I soon discovered, even at the age of thirteen, that many of the books did not provide an extremely satisfying reading experience. But I had quite a few of the early *Superman* issues; which is not to say that Jerry Siegel and Joe Shuster were highly-polished creators. But more than anyone else, it was their sense of the comic book page, and their realization of the speed and narrative agility that could be achieved on it, and their enthusiasm for this bold storytelling form, that despite any purely "artistic" crudities, catapulted comic books into a profitable industry. All this, of course, in addition to their having created the greatest character possible to spearhead the new genre.

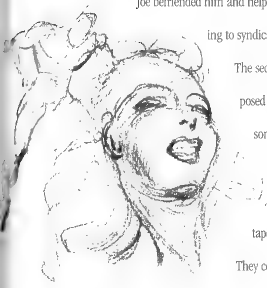
The boys from Cleveland probed to the heart of the "secret identity" concept with astounding clarity: the Superman, Lois Lane, Clark Kent triangle was an inexhaustible source of both comic and tragic material, while always providing a for "hero rescues woman in peril" action. And all of it was supported by the ure of Joe's art, with a classic simplicity, integrity, and an irrepressible "big-foot" streak in his cartooning where comic exaggeration is used to heighten

Concept sheets for Larry Englehart's "Stormy Weathers" detective strip (circa 1958-1960). Note the clarity of the characterization in the three members of the "rogues' gallery".

CO. PITSKY C. ROBERTS COLLECTION

the character of the characters. I'm one of those souls who thinks that the reunion of Jerry and Joe for *Funnyman*, published by Magazine Enterprises in 1948, a decade after *Action* #1 a company run by Vincent Sullivan–who edited *Action* #1–was a cause for celebration.

So it gives me super-pleasure to present here in *CBM*, from the collection of Charlie Rob series of Joe Shuster sketches from a decade after (approximately 1958-1960), that show how, knocks he had received from the industry he virtually co-created and the company whose financial success he had provided, he still mastered the light touch. The first set, as Charlie s "are black-and-white concept designs for a proposed daily strip the original owner, Englehart, was working on, titled *Stormy Weathers*. It was a detective strip, and Shuster's *St* like one of his old Federal Men. Larry was a struggling artist who met Joe in New York City in Joe befriended him and helped on some designs for the Stormy Weathers strip that Larr ing to syndicate."



The second batch are some beautiful color pencil designs for pro posed greeting cards, which feature (for the most part) Joe having some fun with the female form. Charlie says:

"Joe had a delicate touch, and most of these look like pastels rather than color pencil art. Almost all of them have some tape residue at the top from having been taped into a scrapbook."

Pencil design for the proposed "When you have your fling..." greeting card (circa 1958-1960).

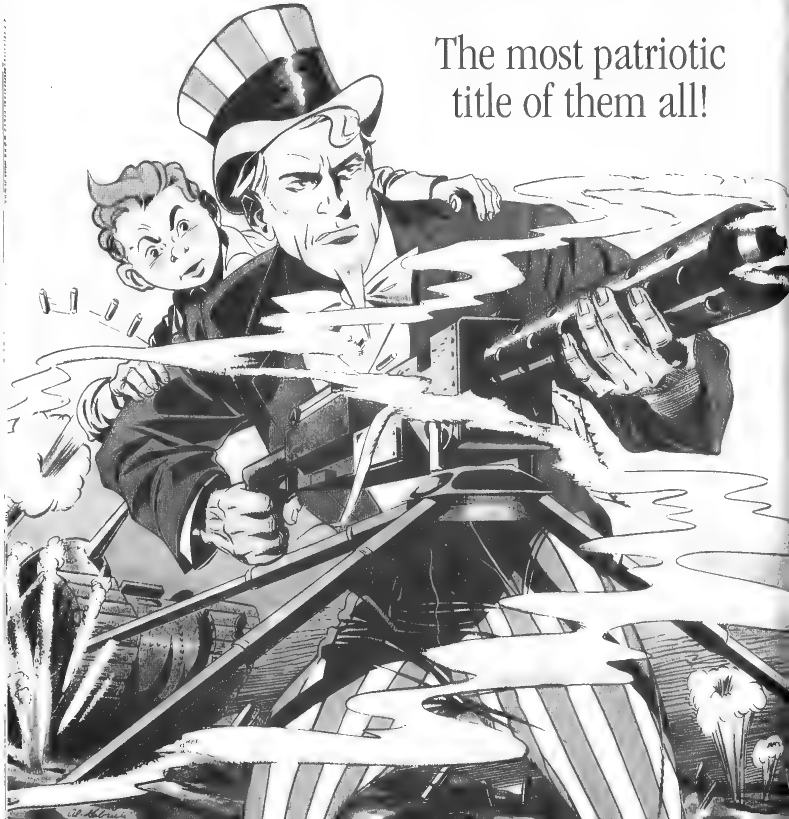
They certainly speak for themselves, and they also say something about the irrepressible

Continued on page 79

By
Jon Berk

National

The most patriotic title of them all!



Comics

Surveyed in this column have been a number of titles which, due to their relative obscurity, one had to dig deep in the comic box to unearth. However, this time around I am going to survey briefly the early issues of a title which is laying right on top. This title is *National Comics*. As produced by Will Eisner for Quality Comics, *National* represents another anthology title of the early Golden Age. Although its feature characters have largely been relegated to the obscurity of the Golden Age, this title, along with its sister titles, showcased at one time probably the finest assembly of Golden Age artists. Quality Publications, which was formed by Everett "Busy" Arnold, showcased some of the greatest of the Golden Age artists such as Lou Fine, William Eisner, Jack Cole, Reed Crandall and Paul Gustavson. Memorable renderings were also produced by George ("The Clock") Brenner, Gil ("Death Patrol") Fox, Samuel ("Wonder Boy") Iger, and Fred ("Merlin the Magician") Guardineer.

As a company, the Quality art staff produced, perhaps the finest artwork of the Golden Age. One need look no further than the covers of Fine's early *Hit Comics*, the uniqueness of Cole's Plastic Man in *Police Comics* or Midnight in *Smash Comics*, Blackhawk in *Military Comics*, Eisner/Fine's Dollman in *Feature Comics*, Eisner/Fine's The Ray in *Smash Comics*, and the tremendously underrated characters and art appearing in *National Comics* courtesy of Eisner, Fine, Crandall and others.

First appearing in July 1940, *National Comics* followed *Feature Funnies*, *Smash Comics* and *Crack Comics*. It was on the newsstands at the same time as *Hit Comics* #1.

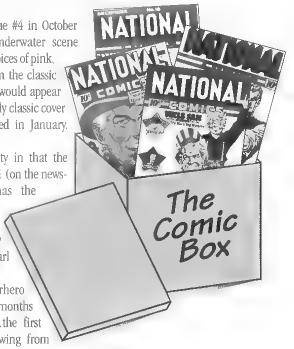
The lead feature was Uncle Sam. As conceived by Will Eisner, this character was the ultimate patriotic hero, taking on foes of this country nearly eighteen months before the United States entered World War II. He literally leaped from the depiction of Uncle Sam as he appeared on World War I recruiting posters. Uncle Sam grew out of the founding "spirit" of freedom of America. Through America's history, he was always there to help "wherever Americans struggle".

As revealed in the fifth issue, the spirit of Uncle Sam joins with the body of a mid-westerner named Sam. He is given invincibility and incredible strength. In the initial episode, he helps a boy named Buddy (who was to become his kid sidekick) defeat a group of men who had aspirations of replacing democracy with their own brand of dictatorship by kidnapping the president. This group, who were known as "Purple Shirts", was a close parody of the Nazis, down to the cross insignia for the group, their raised arm salute, and the Hitler-like mustache on one of the co-leaders.

Uncle Sam dealt with the confrontations with folksy good humor and determination As the adventures went on and the inevitable entry into the war loomed, the strip and the character took on a harder edge. He had incredible strength and was invulnerable to blows or bullets. As revealed in the second issue he could not be photographed.

Eisner's art on the strip was fantastic. It is always tough to determine if it was Will's innovative style or Fine's that had its inevitable and compelling influence on the staff artists. Most strips used his unusual framing and the "breaking of panels", having action unconfined to a single panel but literally exploding into the next. In fact, it seemed that to draw a strip in *National*, that the artist was almost "required" to employ this powerful artistic technique.

(Of some interest is that issue #4 in October 1940, page three, has an underwater scene including bubbles with color choices of pink, green and black used by Fine in the classic cover for *Hit Comics* #5 which would appear a mere month later, and, the truly classic cover of *National* #7 which appeared in January. Coincidence? I think not.)



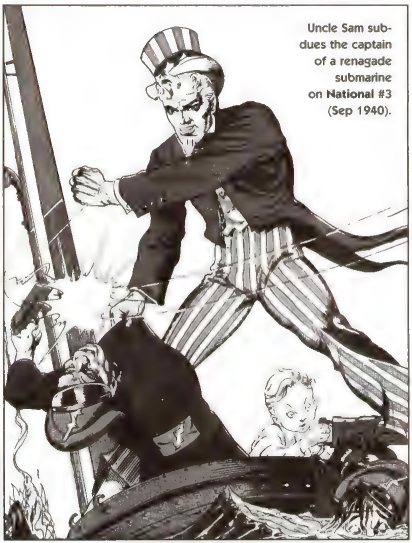
Issue #18 has some notoriety in that the story, cover dated December 1941 (on the newsstands October 8, 1941), has the Japanese bombing the American fleet in Guam and battleships attacking Pearl Harbor, shortly before the real bombing at Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941.

Another feature was superhero Wonder Boy (appearing three months after DC's "Boy Wonder") ...the first teenage costumed hero, borrowing from another DC character it seems this boy has traveled from the depths of space, and upon reaching our planet is vested with the strength of a thousand men. He leaves the orphanage that has been his childhood home to help fight the battles against oppression that are raging in Europe.

Keeping up with DC, the book also featured Merlin the Magician by Fred Guardineer who had drawn the adventures of *Action Comics* resident magician, "Zatara". The adventures were well-drawn and exciting. Merlin found it quite helpful to have his cloak of invisibility. Exactly like his DC counterpart. Merlin invoked his magic by saying words backwards.

Not to end this "flattery" of DC, by the fifth issue, Quicksilver (the resident speed merchant) was added as beautifully rendered by Nick Cardy (Viscardi), Cole, Gustavson and others.

And what anthology book would be complete without a gang of kids of different economic and racial backgrounds? Such was the Kid Patrol... mixing it up with bad guys in "Little Rascals" style.



Uncle Sam subdues the captain of a renagade submarine on National #3 (Sep 1940).

NATIONAL COMICS © DC(NA) '71

The Hun is depicted as an evil green skeleton on National #16 (Oct 1941), just months before the attack on Pearl Harbor.

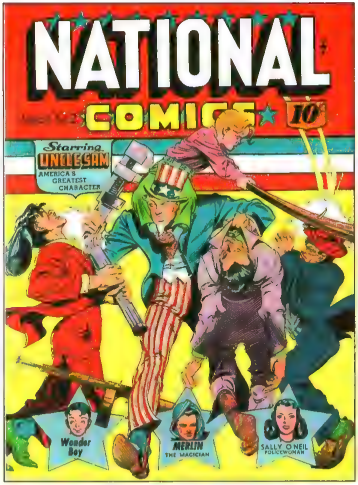
Third rate characters/features (e.g. Sally O'Neil, Police Woman; Paul Bunyon; Jack and Jill (a mystery solving couple a la "The Thin Man" with Nick and Nora Charles), were also beautifully drawn. Even John Ralph Cole (using the pseudonym "Ralph Johns") added occasional humor fillers such as "Windy Breeze".

The early covers were drawn by Eisner, Crandall and Fine. Although collectors do not often consider these as "classic" as the covers produced for *Hit Comics* #1-17, the earlier *National* covers were dramatic, dynamic and compelling. The early numbers represent vintage Fine work with the classic underwater cover of *National* #7. *National* #5 is a variation of Fine's skull and bound woman motif (compare *Hit* #7), and covers reflecting his ability to bring motion to the drawn page are exemplified by issues #10, 11 and 13.

The cover of issue #20 shows the classic influence of Fine introducing "saliva" to the comic book medium. Although routine by today's standards, renderings of saliva by Fine and his art cohorts were employed for dramatic effect. When it came to drool, Fine was the master. (Check out his "ghoul drool" on *Wonderworld* #7.) The covers of *National Comics* #21, 26, 27 and 32 bluntly conveyed that Uncle Sam was ready to fight the aggressors who dragged America into worldwide conflict. Jingoism and the resolve to fight was exuded by Uncle Sam firing a machine gun taking on all comers with an accompanying cover blurb of "Make 'em say uncle, Sam!" wonderfully drawn by Al Gabriele.

As *CBM* salutes patriotic heroes, please give a tip of your hat to the most patriotic title of them all... *National Comics*! ■

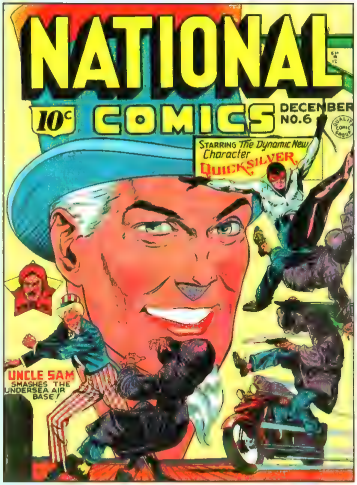
Jon Berk is the president of the AACC and is a nationally known comic book collector, researcher, and historian. Jon's first love is second tier publishers (especially pre-Golden Age and early Golden Age) and Lou Fine art.

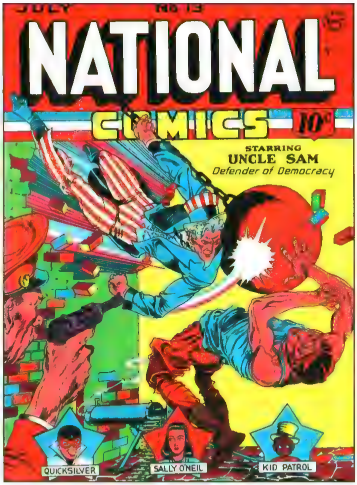

NATIONAL
COMICS
10¢
Starring
UNCLE SAM
AMERICA'S GREATEST CHARACTER
Wonder Boy
MERLIN
THE MAGICIAN
SALLY O'NEIL
POLICEWOMAN

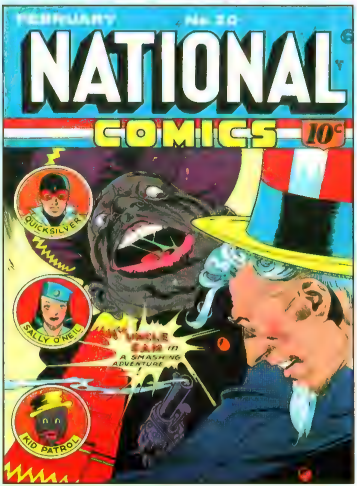
NATIONAL
COMICS
ANNOUNCING
QUICKSILVER
NOVEMBER
No. 5
A SMASHING NEW STAR TO THRILL YOU! Starts in this issue
Starring
UNCLE SAM
THE GREATEST COMIC OF ALL TIME!
10¢

NATIONAL
OCTOBER
COMICS
10¢
Starring
UNCLE SAM
MERLIN
SALLY O'NEIL
KID PATROL

OCTOBER
No. 16
NATIONAL
COMICS
10¢
STARRING
Uncle Sam
AMERICA'S GREATEST HERO
QUICKSILVER
SALLY O'NEIL
KID PATROL


NATIONAL
10c COMICS DECEMBER NO.6
STARRING The Dynamic New Character QUICKSILVER
UNCLE SAM SMASHES THE UNDERSEA AIR BASE!

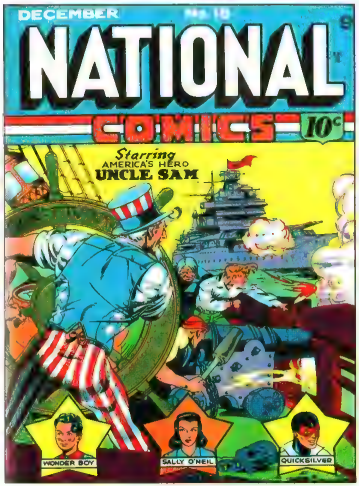

JULY No. 13
NATIONAL
COMICS 10c
STARRING UNCLE SAM
Defender of Democracy
QUICKSILVER
SALLY O'NEIL
KID PATROL

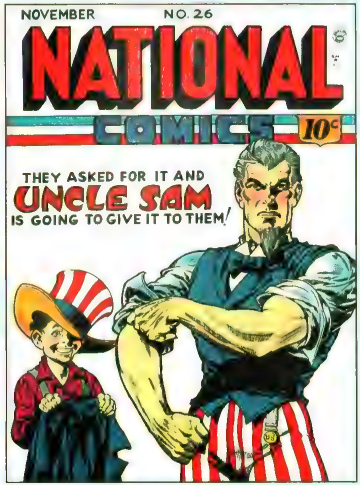

FEBRUARY No. 10
NATIONAL
COMICS 10c
QUICKSILVER
SALLY O'NEIL
KID PATROL
UNCLE SAM IN A SMASHING ADVENTURE

JUNE No. 12
NATIONAL
COMICS 10c
Starring UNCLE SAM
America's Greatest Character
QUICKSILVER
SALLY O'NEIL
KID PATROL

APRIL
NO. 10
NATIONAL
COMICS
10c
IN THIS ISSUE
UNCLE SAM
AMERICA'S GREATEST CHARACTER!
SALLY O'NEIL
QUICKSILVER
KID PATROL

MAY
No. 11
NATIONAL
COMICS
10c
QUICKSILVER
SALLY O'NEIL
STARRIN
UNCLE
SAM
AMERICA'S
GREATEST
HERO!


DECEMBER
No. 15
NATIONAL
COMICS
10c
Starring
AMERICA'S HERO
UNCLE SAM
WONDER BOY
SALLY O'NEIL
QUICKSILVER


NOVEMBER
NO. 26
NATIONAL
COMICS
10c
THEY ASKED FOR IT AND
UNCLE SAM
IS GOING TO GIVE IT TO THEM!

JANUARY No.7

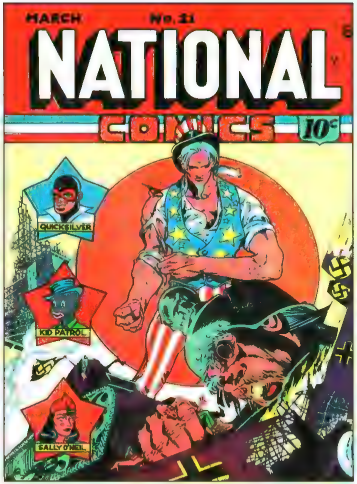
NATIONAL COMICS

15¢ IN CANADA 10¢

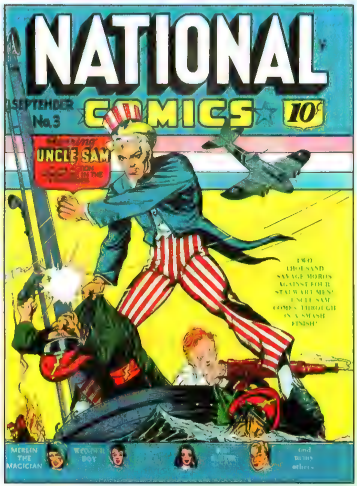
And Many Others!

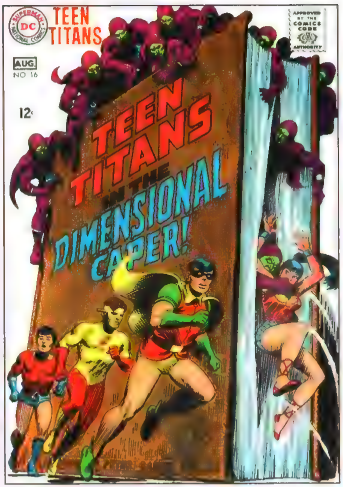
DECEMBER
NO. 27
NATIONAL
COMICS
10c
MAKE 'EM SAY UNCLE, SAM!

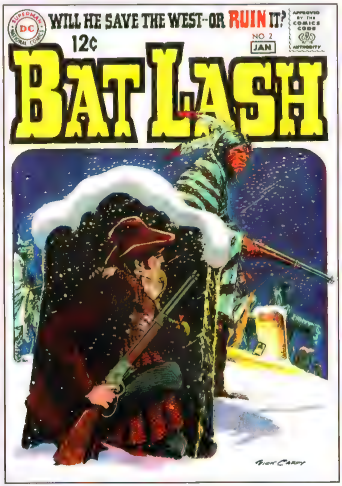
FEBRUARY
No. 8
NATIONAL
COMICS
10¢
Starring
UNCLE SAM
and Many Others


MARCH
No. 11
NATIONAL
COMICS
10¢
QUICKSILVER
KID PATROL
SALLY O'NEIL

JANUARY
NO. 19
NATIONAL
10¢
COMICS
UNCLE SAM
with Uncle Sam Jr. in
"The Black Fog Mystery"
QUICKSILVER
SALLY O'NEIL
WONDER BOY

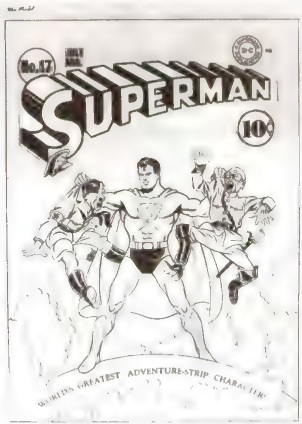

NATIONAL
SEPTEMBER
No. 3
COMICS
10¢
UNCLE SAM
MERLIN THE MAGICIAN
WONDER BOY





A QUARTET OF NICK CARDY CLASSICS!

COMIC BOOKS AT SOTHEBY'S



Fred Ray, original art for the cover of Superman No 17. Auction estimate: $20,000–40,000

Highlights:

Marvel Comics No. 1 from the Lamont Larson Collection, A.C.G. very fine 84. Auction estimate: $30,000–50,000

Marvel Mystery Comics No. 2 from the Lamont Larson Collection, A.C.G. very fine plus 88. Auction estimate: $7,000–10,000

Detective Comics No. 27, unrestored copy, A.C.G. fine 67. Auction estimate: $40,000–60,000

Daredevil Comics Nos. 1 and 2 from the Mile High/Edgar Church Collection, A.C.G. near mint 91. Auction estimate: $15,000–20,000

Auction in New York: Friday and Saturday, June 13 and 14, 1997

Exhibition: Wednesday–Friday, June 11–13

Beverly Hills preview: Wednesday–Friday, June 4–6

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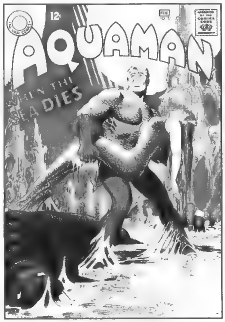
in showing bloodshed. I'm that way. I don't like any cruelty. I won't even step on a roach! [*Laughter*] It's just one of those things where I hate anything that hurts anyone.

If I had a script where a woman was going to be stabbed, I wouldn't visually show the killer sticking a knife in the victim. It cheapens the shot to show everything. For example; I would first show the woman at a vanity table in her bedroom. The next panel would show just the man's shoes standing outside her door, then a shadow of the knife on the wall behind her. As she's sitting there, the reader sees the knife getting closer. Then you see her bedroom door from the hallway and hear her scream. Suggestion is so much more powerful than showing the actual violence. By suggesting, you allow the reader's imagination to visualize the event. I learned this technique while in Bill Eisner's shop back in the 1940s.

Also, John Ford, the movie director, and Rene Clair were influential with this technique. Both had a way of getting the shot that really set the mood, and moved very fluid like. As a matter of fact, I was complimented on my work by several movie directors. I remember while at DC, a French movie director came up to the office, introduced himself, and took our picture together. He directed the movie, "Hiroshima, Mon Amour", from many years ago. His name was Alain Resnais. And Frederico Fellini was also a fan of mine. I was very flattered because I was getting compliments and recognition from people whose work I liked.

JOHN: *In the early 1960s you began drawing Aquaman and have become the artist most associated with the character. How did this come about?*

NICK: Ramona Fradon had been doing the character but was moving on. I don't remember how I came on the book, though. Murray would always complain that I did not draw enough fish in the background. I kept telling him, "Look at the pages, do you see fish? I see fish!" [*Laughter*] Anyway, I remember we would have Aquaman command the fish to do this or that, mainly to involve the fish in the storyline because they were part of his realm. Also, kids found it fascinating that we would show the sea creatures doing things humans did.



JOHN: *Carmine Infantino once said that when he took over as publisher from Harry Donenfeld, Murray wanted to take you off Aquaman because he felt you didn't draw enough fish in the backgrounds. Carmine said, "Who cares about fish, Murray? Cardy stays!"*

NICK: I had never heard about that incident. Carmine was always good to the artists, though. He would evaluate an artist on their own merit.

JOHN: *Did you like the Aquaman character?*

NICK: I came to, yes. I loved to do research and found it fascinating to find what fish would be at this or that depth, what fish were in this or that part of the ocean. Bob Haney wrote most of the stories, though I would develop the actual character look. For instance, they would write that Mera and Aquaman were holding the child. I would then draw the two characters embracing, holding the child, looking at one another, that sort of thing. I would add the romance and set the mood. I think these little things complemented the writing and illustrated the point more fully.

JOHN: *Were you involved in the plotting?*

NICK: No. I never sat down with the writers and plotted out the issues. What the writer would do, on *Aquaman* and *Teen Titans* at least, is go into Murray's or George's [Kashdan] office and propose a story and have a session. Once it was approved and written, I would receive the finished script.

Early on at DC, the script would also include the panel layout, by page The layout was restricted to eight panels, then six. Later, they'd let the artist decide on what went in the panels. Depending on how competent an artist you were, the editor would let you deviate from this formula a little As the years went by DC allowed the artist more freedom in the actual page layout.

JOHN: *That's a huge contrast to today.*

NICK: Yes. I was fortunate that I had as much freedom as I did. I've always felt setting a page layout is like a movie. The design is so important. For instance, you get this story in plot format, and build a page up to the last panel. First, I make a long shot to establish the scene, then pan in.

The cover for Aquaman #37 (Feb 1968) is beautifully designed and makes one suspect that the Sea-King owes much of his mid-60's success to the renderings of Nick Cardy.

When you pick up the characters, you introduce them through the visuals and dialogue. If the script didn't do this, or was not paced well, I would work in the drama and use the art to balance the pages. Even with the actual figure within the layout you have design. I once did a thing with *Ballash* where I showed the reader looking through a person's elbow while someone was talking, with the other figure in the foreground. Also, let's say you have a character coming into a two-story house and you have a long shot where you set the scene. If you know something is going to take place upstairs, you use the long shot to set the scene, while the second shot is a close up of the banister. Maybe you see part of a foot and the tiny people below through the banister. Regardless, you establish that something is upstairs only by alluding to it. You use these types of techniques to lead the reader to something relevant and not just place a layout there arbitrarily. To continue my example, if you're going to take an angle shot from upstairs, and nothing is going to happen, you have no business taking the shot from upstairs. You're trying to be artistic and cute, but it does not work because the shot has no purpose.

The same point can be illustrated with movies. If something, an event, is going to be very dramatic, to show the contrast you first show the people laughing or doing something where they obviously don't know the event is about to occur. When it occurs, the drama is such a contrast to the previous scene that it enhances the shock. When Beethoven wanted this effect, he would build up the music softly, then come with this huge sound that really took you away. If the music were loud to begin with, then getting loud again means nothing. No tension or contrast. It's also important to pace the story to enhance the plot. If I know something violent is going to occur on page 6, I try to have pages 1–5 peaceful. Again, contrast for impact. This is why I had trouble with some of the writers at DC because their stories had no continuity. They were putting things in unnecessarily just to have them in the story.

JOHN: *In your first two to three years on* Aquaman, *the covers seemed to always have a sea monster on them. I remember Julie Schwartz once said that he would always have a gorilla on the cover to sell his books.*

NICK: Yes. We felt they would sell books and attract kids. It did, too!

JOHN: *In* Aquaman *#11, Aquaman's wife, Mera, was introduced. Why give him a wife?*

NICK: I can't really remember, but it was Bob and Murray's idea. They both thought up a character called Mera and added her to the script. It was then up to me to design her look and portray the character. Other than her being a woman, the script left her look to me. I can't remember who I based her look on, but I used to look to movies to find inspirations.

JOHN: *The characters eventually married in* Aquaman *#18. This was odd for a hero in the early 1960s to be married.*

NICK: I know that to me, marrying the hero in a comic book is a death knell. Once you marry them off, you lose all your following and you lose the possibility of any sexual tension between the main female and male character.

JOHN: *How about them having a baby? That seemed pretty risky in those days, don't you think?*

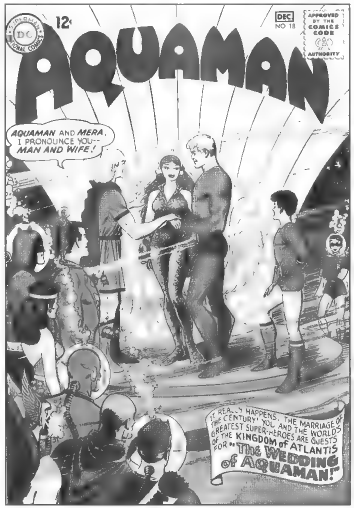
NICK: Absolutely. I don't think it had been done before and was unique to comics. I thought it was very odd, though. With our audience being kids and teenagers, who would this appeal, too? You know, we never showed her pregnant. At the beginning of the issue the reader found out she was pregnant and by the end of the issue the baby was born. Puff! Just like that! [*Laughter.*]

JOHN: *Did you know Bob Haney very well?*

NICK: We got along well but never socialized. We worked together for many years and would always discuss the strips and exchange views or concepts. He was an easygoing guy.

JOHN: *In* Aquaman *#33, the character of Tula was introduced. Any particular reason?*

NICK: I think it stemmed from the idea that Aquaman had Mera, and Aqualad was sort of left out. So George and Bob wrote in a young girl character, Tula. As with Mera, I designed Tula's outfit and overall look. She was Aqualad's companion, being of the same age they could relate to one another, or oppose the elders.



The JLA attends the historic wedding of Aquaman and Mera on Cardy's Silver Age cover of Aquaman #18 (Dec 1964).

JOHN: *Around the mid-late 1960s, your* Aquaman *covers became very design oriented. Any particular reason?*

NICK: Well, that must have been around the same time when Carmine Infantino took over as publisher from Donenfeld. Up until that time, DC's cover policy was pretty set on what you could or could not portray. With

Carmine being an artist, he understood my need to break out of the norm and take chances artistically. Those *Aquaman* covers were influenced by Eisner's *The Spirit* splash pages where I would work the title into the actual cover illustration;. Aquaman standing on top of the logo, stalactites forming the "Aquaman" logo, etc. I also did this for "Lady Luck" back in the forties. This again shows the influence of good movie direction.

JOHN: *With issue #39 (around 1968), Dick Giordano took over as editor of* Aquaman *from Murray Boltinoff. Can you compare and contrast their editorial styles?*

NICK: Completely different. Dick and I became good friends and remain so today. Dick was an artist so he understood the medium more and liked to create and deal with the creative process.

JOHN: *During the late 1960s, there was an animated cartoon on CBS television called, "The Superman/Aquaman Hour". Were you involved in this?*

NICK: Not with the actual animation, no. I did do character profiles for the animators; full figure drawings, right side, left side, drawings of the faces, profiles, etc... These were used as character guides when the animator would draw the character on the animation cells. Originally, old man Leibowitz wanted me to go to Australia, were the animation was being produced, and assist with the actual drawing of the animation, but someone negated it. Just my luck! [*Laughter*] In fact, I was disappointed with the animators in that they did not do the sea horses as I had drawn them. There were also some Aquaman toys that came out about this time, but I had nothing to do with it. The toy company did use one of my characters, Mongo, for a villain figure.

JOHN: *Those 3" action figures were by Ideal Toy Company as part of their "Justice League of America" play set. They're very rare and sought after today. Though the character of Aquaman is my favorite, I've always wondered why such a minor character was chosen for a national cartoon series.*

MY GREATEST ADVENTURE
"I WAS KING of the MECHANICAL MEN!"
SOMETHING'S GONE WRONG! THE ROBOTS ARE OUT OF CONTROL! THEY'RE DISOBEYING MY ORDERS!
GREATEST ADVENTURE
featuring "WE BATTLED THE SPACE GIANT!"

Giant mechanical men and a space giant were just a sample of the many Cardy-created DC sci-fi creatures. Shown above, My Greatest Adventure #24 and #26 (Oct & Dec 1958).

NICK: The character had quite a following at the time. Also, DC thought kids would enjoy adventures in the sea, and underwater. It was a different environment than the other two DC heroe cartoons. Batman and Superman, broadcast at the same time.

JOHN: *Let's talk about your Teen Titans work. George Kashdan and Bob Haney were the writers…*

NICK: Yes. George was the editor, while Bob was the writer, though they both plotted out and wrote the book.

JOHN: *What was George like?*

NICK: George was mild mannered, easy to talk to, and very friendly. As an editor, he was flexible. Anything I wanted to portray on the cover, he'd let me do it. Compared to some other editors at DC, working with George was like opening a window and letting the light in. [*Laughter*] I was ready to quit the whole industry after that Donenfeld incident, but George convinced me to stay at DC Comics.

JOHN: *What happened with Donenfeld?*

NICK: Well, Harry Donenfeld was a pretty cold individual, at least to me anyway. This was the son, not the father. By the late 1960s, I had been working at DC for over 15 years, producing monthly work, and felt I should have a raise. At this time DC was only paying about $40 a page. That's not that much, even back then. Understand, I was never one to make waves or complain, and had always been a good employee but thought I was due. I spoke to George Kashdan, my editor for *Teen Titans*, and he agreed and went to see Harry. When George asks for my raise, Donenfeld tells him, "Well. we were thinking about letting a few artists go, George, so..." And that was the end of that! Basically, because I was asking for a raise, this guy was going to lay me off. Because of this, on *Teen Titans* #13, the Christmas issue, I was so upset with Donenfeld that I was going to quit DC. Then I said, "The heck with it". Good compliments on that job from fellow artists who I respected helped calm me down and carry me through.

JOHN: *Let's talk about your inking. On* Teen Titans, *you inked a few artists ...toss a out a couple: Neal Adams?*

NICK: Neal was an accurate, tight penciler, and easy to ink over. In a way, I envied his outward confidence in himself and his work.

JOHN: *What was the contrast in inking Gil Kane as opposed to Neal Adams?*

NICK: Gil had a style of his own on the faces and the way he used his blacks and shading. They were mechanically correct, similar to Burne Hogarth's work. We knew each other for quite awhile. He's very good.

JOHN: *Did you like others to ink your work?*

NICK: Well, I never allowed any inker on my work. If I penciled something, I inked it. When I inked others work, I would always add my style to theirs. Take faces for example… if the penciller drew a 3/4 view of a person screaming, I would ink the pencils closely to the original… but the way I handed the eyes, the mouth, and the expression would be my own.

JOHN: *How did the character Batlash come about?*

NICK: Well, Carmine Infantino, Joe Orlando, Dick Giordano, and I started talking about a western character that could be a killer, but also loved flowers, a Robert Redford with the women, very smooth, a charmer and a food gourmet. At that time, most of the western heroes were of the Gene Autry type, very wholesome. Batlash played dirty. The character creation was a total group effort.

JOHN: *Didn't Sergio Aragones assist with the plotting?*

NICK: Yes, he came on later. We got along well, and he co-wrote some of the stories. He was very friendly and quite a nice guy. Whenever we'd meet either by an elevator or in the hall, we would always fast draw at each other. [*Laughter*]

JOHN: *I believe Denny O'Neil took over the writing chores midway through the series.*

NICK: Yes. I enjoyed working with Denny. He's a very good writer and really understands the medium. Denny was the only writer that asked about the characters or any approach I had in mind. I would add my ideas and he would polish it with his words. It made you feel more involved, and, I think, produced a better story.

JOHN: *Do you have a favorite issue or scene?*

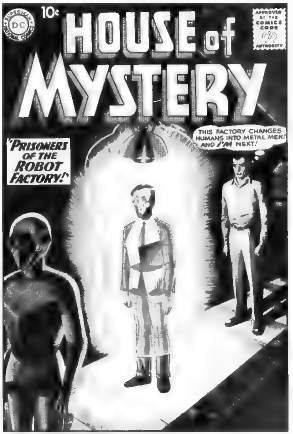
NICK: Oh, yes. My favorite cover was the one with Batlash and this little girl hiding behind a tombstone on the cover of issue #2. This is also my favorite story. One of my favorite scenes in this issue was where Batlash is defending this little girl and thinks she's been shot. At the moment he thinks she's been shot, I show a close up of his face with the image of her face in his pupils. The page layout, the emotion of the characters, the feel of the drama, it all came together and worked well. We later did a Batman story set in the ghetto, with a lot of colorful characters, very dark and moody in atmosphere. I liked that work.

JOHN: *That issue's cover is also one of my favorites. Why was the book canceled?*

NICK: The market just fizzled out, and the book was not selling well enough. It's a shame because I think it was very good work.

JOHN: *It was. That work still holds up well today. In the early 1970s, you really became "the" DC Comics' cover. You did most of the covers on DC's comics from 1971– early 1975. This was during the period when DC Comics were 20¢, along with the numerous 100-page giants.*

NICK: I began to take my art into other fields but would still do comic covers. I remember, *Ghosts, Witching Hour, Superman, Wonder Woman, Justice League of America, Batman, World's Finest,* and a few others. Covers allowed me steady work, but I could still work in advertising. About 1975 I started to get more advertising and illustration work. Through the mid-1970s I also did work for Marvel Comics magazine-size publications, like *Crazy*. Stan Lee had always asked that I come over to Marvel, but I just never had the time until then.


10¢
HOUSE of MYSTERY
APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY
"PRISONERS OF THE ROBOT FACTORY!"
THIS FACTORY CHANGES HUMANS INTO METAL MEN AND I'M NEXT!

Cardy rendered the classic Silver Age grey-tone cover of House Of Mystery #93 (Dec 1959).

JOHN: *What was the "Superman Advertising incident"?*

NICK: Well, my discontent with the industry had been coming for a while but it really came to a head with this incident. It was the mid-1970s and I had been making plans and preparing new samples to get out of comics and into strictly illustration and advertising. I had worked up this nice collage of all my Superman covers, with a large figure of Superman flying diagonally in the foreground to show to the agencies.

I presented this to an advertising agency and they loved it. So much so, they wanted me to use the character and layout design in a soft drink billboard ad campaign they were planning in England. I mentioned that they first needed to get permission from DC Comics to use the character. Well, the advertising agency art director, a young lady, went up to DC Comics to obtain permission, met with Sol Harrison, and asked that I be the artist on the account

Sol pointed out that I was "only one of the artists" who drew Superman and promptly gave the job to someone else. Later that same week I went up to visit Neal Adams in his studio and there was Dick Giordano re-drawing my piece to be used in the ad! That's how I found out I didn't get the account but that my idea was still being used.

Also, the agency had told me the job paid $500 but Dick was only getting $150. We never could figure out where the other $350 went. Understand, I was never upset with Dick. We were and remain good friends. He just took the assignment he was given without prior knowledge of the situation. Anyway, I went to see Carmine Infantino and really blew my stack. You know, when I blew my stack up in the office, everyone listened because I never got angry about anything. After telling Carmine about the situation, he called in Sol. Sol said that this woman came in and just wanted an artist to draw Superman, and so on.

The fact was that I had researched and presented the idea to the agency and received the go ahead from them to do the job. Honest Joe me, told the agency that they had to check with DC prior to my starting. The result was that I didn't get the job. I then told them that I had a few other pending deals with advertising agencies but because of this treatment, I canceled

the accounts and did not divulge the agencies. It was very frustrating.

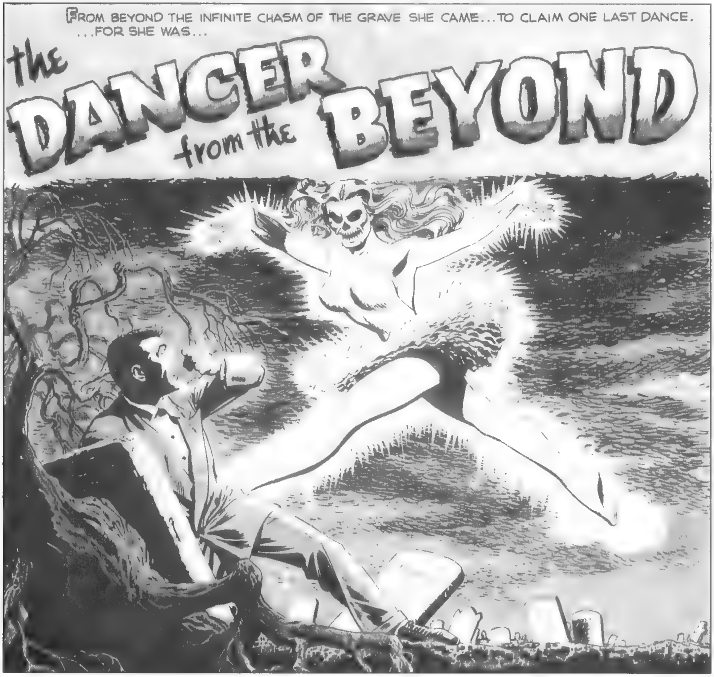
JOHN: *Sol was a Production Manager?*

NICK: Yes. Sol was always an enigma to me. For 15 years we hardly exchanged a word. For some reason, I must have rubbed him the wrong way. For instance, we would be standing alone in an elevator, or meet in a hallway. I'd say "Hi", or "Good Morning" or something, but would never get an answer. Another time, I was alone in a room cleaning up a job, and he walked over to my desk and looked at my work. When I turned to ask if I could help him, without a word he just turned around and walked out. I mentioned this behavior to several artists but they seemed to get along with him. As I said before, he was an enigma. Who knows? Maybe I was one to him, too.

JOHN: *During this time your art became more humorous in style. Was this intended?*

NICK: Yes. But that was mainly on the *Plop* magazine stories. At this time, I was getting into illustration. However, there were already hundreds of illustrators who did realistic illustrations. Of these, only about 300 were top notch. Even fewer did humorous illustration. Since I liked humor, I decided to lean my work that way, which also cut down on the odds of competition. My caricatures were always mild, as say compared

An eerie and scarce Cardy splash introduces a horror yarn in Standard's Adventures Into Darkness #7 (Dec 1952).



to Jack Davis. It all paid off in the long run.

JOHN: *Painting is a hobby, correct?*

NICK: Yes, but I don't paint much any more. I did a few western scenes, and some galleries told me they were as good as the best or even better than some of the well-known western artists. I had these in a few galleries in Texas, but then I got it out of my system. I think they're the best work I've done, actually. All in oil.

JOHN: *I agree. Those are beautifully done and thank you for showing them to me. What is your process with painting?*

NICK: First off, I would get an idea that interested me. Then I would sit and decide which design expresses my idea best. I would then make thumbnail sketches as to size, color, black and white patterns and lighting, and decide on what painting medium to use. From that, I make an illustrated, canvas-size scaled down version of what I want to paint and do several roughs. When I was satisfied with the vision I wanted to portray I walk away and leave it alone until the next morning. If I was still satisfied with it, I would begin to paint it.

JOHN: *You also did movie posters?*

NICK: Yes, a great many. The first I did was for a movie called, "Big Bertha". Next I did a poster for a movie called, "The New Adventures of Snow White". I liked to call it "Snow White and the Seven Horny Dwarfs" [*Laughter*] Some people who had seen it told me that the poster was the best thing about the movie! [*Laughter*] The next job offered me was for a movie called, "Bad News Bears". I declined because years before I had to take these same people to court to pay me for another movie poster I had done for them. Jack Davis ended up doing it, so I thought, well, if he'll do it then these people must be OK now. I then did the poster for the sequel, "Bad News Bears Breakin' Training", Neil Simon's, "California Suite", "Movie Movie" which starred George C. Scott, and "Casey Shadow", which starred Walter Matthau. I also did "Super Jocks", which was the only time I used models to draw from. The last one I did was "Meatballs 2". In fact, the video movie jacket is my poster so if you go into a video store, look it up!

JOHN: *How did the ideas for the posters come about?*

NICK: The studio would give me copies of stills from the movie, along with an overview of the plot. As with comic covers, I would do a few layouts, and the studio would pick one. If they didn't like your layouts, they'd still pay you–so the money was nice. In fact, I did the poster layouts for the first "Superman" movie with Christopher Reeve, but it was rejected. In the end, they settled for just showing the emblem of "Superman" on the poster.

JOHN: *Along with comics, I'm interested in comic book related merchandise. Did I see your work on a superhero glass?*

NICK: Yes. That would be Wonder Woman. I did an illustration for a Wonder Woman glass along with the store banner for the glass set for Pepsi and the Hardee's hamburger chain.

JOHN: *I thought so. When did you retire?*

Cardy goes Hollywood in this humorous drawing for a "Bad News Bears" movie poster.

NICK: I'm not! [*Laughter*] I'm just slower, and more selective of assignments.

JOHN: *How would you sum up your career in comic books?*

NICK: Well, my goal in life, even as a kid, was to be a good artist. I grew up during the Depression when money and food were scarce. Therefore, going to true art school was out of the question. My schools and teachers were always very kind to me and encouraged my efforts. Mostly, I was self-taught, read books, studied other artists and made a second home of New York City's art museums and Illustrators' Society. Starting in comics was a way of learning, and a stepping stone towards illustration. Working with all the different people involved seemed like battling your way through a maze of egos, some good, some bad. I was no exception. My work wasn't very fast, but as deliberate and as artistic as I could make it, in the time allotted. I always thought that old comic artists never died, they just flew away! [*Laughter*] It wasn't until several years ago that I learned that people remembered me and were interested in my comic art. I never knew anyone remembered. It's a very satisfying and good feeling to know that fans enjoyed my work and to be remembered by my fellow artists. I'm genuinely flattered.

JOHN: *Believe me, it's been my pleasure!* ■

The cover of Batlash #2 (Jan 1969) is one of Nick's favorites.

Nick Cardy, John Coates, and Gary Carter would like to publicly thank Dan Greenhalgh for his generous help with graphic materials.

MORE ON THE RAY CUMMINGS MYSTERY

BY WILL MURRAY

In his article "Sub-Atomic Sojourn," (*Comic Book Marketplace* #37), contributor Jeff Gelb posed the question: Could legendary science fiction author, Ray Cummings, have possibly scripted the two-part Captain America epic, "The Princess of the Atom"? in *Captain America Comics* #25 and #26, back in 1943? Gelb painstakingly assembled his facts, pointing to the very striking similarities between this half-forgotten Cap adventure and Cummings' famous novel, "The Girl in the Golden Atom", but was forced to admit his very good research had brought him to a disappointing dead end. Such are

the problems attributing comic book script work that even though the previous issue of *Captain America Comics* (#24, March 1943) had ballyhooed the upcoming two-parter as by the author of the early science fiction classic "The Girl in the Golden Atom", because the author was not explicitly named, the question had to be considered unanswered.

I believe I can answer Jeff Gelb's question.

Yes, Ray Cummings did indeed pen that Captain America story. And many others besides.

I don't possess absolute bibliographic documentation of my assertion. I'm forced to induct it from remarks made by his daughter, Elizabeth Starr Hill, in a recent interview which points to the legendary science fiction pulpster as a significant but unrecognized player in comics' formative era.

First, some biographical facts regarding Ray Cummings.

Raymond King Cummings was born on August 4, 1887. Before turning to writing, his chief claim to notoriety was working for Thomas Edison, or for the Edison Phonograph Company–accounts vary.

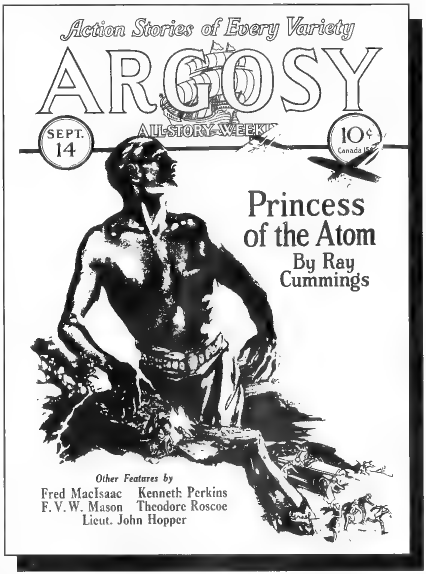
As happens to many writers, his first published story became the most famous and the one for which he will be forever remembered. "The Girl in the Golden Atom" appeared in the *All-Story Weekly*, March 15, 1919. It spawned a pocketful of sequels and launched Cummings as a major SF writer in the 1920s. During that period he showed his versatility, contributing to the top pulp magazines of that day, including Argosy, Blue Book, Weird Tales, Black Mask and Detective Story Magazine.

By the time the Depression hit, the pulp market had changed and Cummings found himself slumming for everything from *Terror Tales*, *Horror Stories* and *Thrilling Mystery* under his own name and such personal pseudonyms as Ray King and Gabriel Wilson, to ghosting Phantom Detective novels under the house name of Robert Wallace. A guy's got to earn a buck. Even if he is a legend.

The closest thing to a comic book character Cummings did up until then, was ghosting *The Phantom Detective* for future DC Comics editors, Jack Schiff and Mort Weisinger. The full extent of Cummings' Phantom work is still hazy. He's known to have ghosted the 1940 Phantom Detective story, "The Phantom's Murder Trail." And he's suspected of having written "Dealers in Death", a pivotal 1936 Phantom opus where innovations like a red signal light to summon the masked Phantom into action and a new flock of Phantom secret identities like Dr. Paul Bendix and Gunner McGlone were first introduced. This was the novel all future Phantom ghosts were given as a model. In all probability, Cummings was brought into the Phantom series by Weisinger, a longtime pulp SF fan

Over the course of a 40 year career, Cummings penned upwards of 800 published stories. Whether this estimate includes his comics work, I don't know, but that Cummings was a major Golden Age comic scripter is beyond dispute. Here is what Elizabeth Starr Hill, who sometimes wrote as S. E. Waldron and Elizabeth Starr, said in Mike Ashley's "Remembering Ray Cummings", in *Pulp Vault* #11, June, 1993: "We both worked for the Timely Group, published by Martin Goodman. It was an anonymous business then. We both wrote Captain America, the Human Torch, Submariner [sic] and others, published by Timely. My editor for some of this period was Stan Lee, a brilliantly creative youth."

There it is. When you add the announcement in *Captain America Comics* #24 of the upcoming story by the author of "The Girl in the Golden Atom", it constitutes proof positive of Cummings' authorship of the early Cap epic. In fact, given the excitement with which the story was blurbed, I wouldn't be surprised if this wasn't Cummings' comic book debut. It was around this time, 1943, that Cummings' steady Phantom Detective work began to dry up. (Weisinger had left pulp editing for National Comics in 1941). No doubt Cummings and his daughter jumped into the Timely pool some time after Simon and Kirby made their famous exit and Stan stepped into Simon's editorial shoes. Whether they also worked for National too, is not known, but neither name has ever surfaced as a DC scripter.



The extent of Ray Cummings' comics may never be documented, but he is only one of the many surprise names that lurk unsuspected in the annals of the Golden Age of comics–and will be revealed in future installments of this column. See you next time… ■

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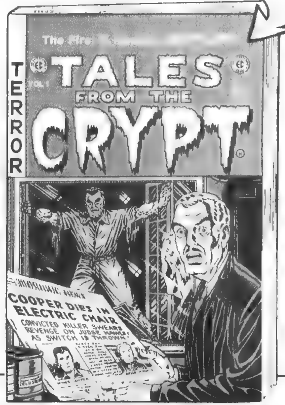

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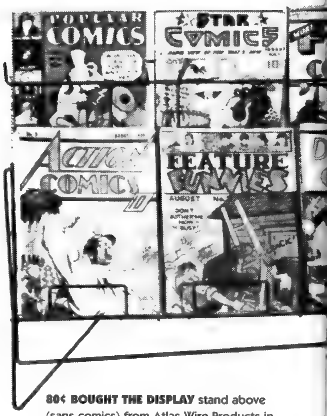
TIME MACHINE

by Harry Matetsky

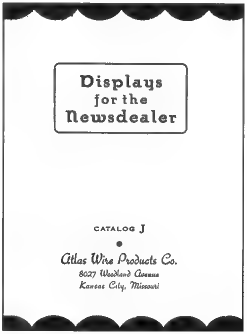
Sometimes the most insightful glimpses into the history of comics are seen in obscure places. As an example, consider the wonderful pictures shown here, taken from both *Displays For The Newsdealer* (published by Atlas Wire Products Company, Kansas City, MO, catalogs H & J, 1939 and 1941), and *The Fawcett Distributor* (August, 1943)–the official magazine of the Fawcett Distributing Corporation. These scarce examples of merchandising memorabilia do more than just fascinate and tantalize us–they provide a rare opportunity to look back and see what it was like when comic books were young. They are truly a comic book collectors' Time Machine.

The staff of WCOP, Boston (circa 1943) reading their copies of **Gift Comics #2**. (Photo from Fawcett Distributor Aug 1943)

ATLAS WIRE RACK NO. 329

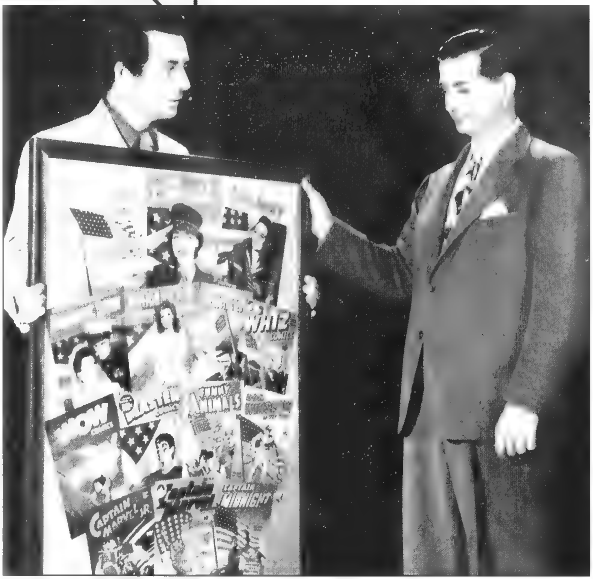


80¢ BOUGHT THE DISPLAY stand above (sans comics) from Atlas Wire Products in 1939. Shown are Popular #31, Star #13, More Fun #34, Cowboy #14, Action #3, Feature Funnies #11, Detective #18, and King #28.



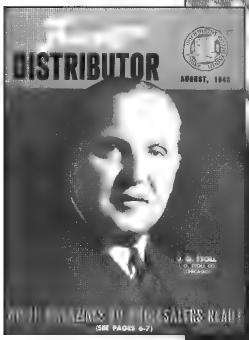
CATALOG "J" from the Atlas Wire Products Company (1941) advertised newspaper, magazine, pulp, and comic book display racks that were sold directly to newsstands and stores. Surviving examples of these racks are now highly collectible.

STACKED FOUR OR FIVE DEEP Atlas using the following "new" comic books to advertise its No. 529 Wire Rack (circa 1941, $4.50 each): Action #19, Magic #4, Adventure #44, Top Notch #1, Smash #5, Speed #2, Ace #17, Mystery Men #5, Funny Pages #?, Amazing Mystery Funnies #1, Keen Detective Funnies #16, Funny Picture Stories #18, Cowboy Comics #14, Star Comics #13, Wonder-World #7, Amazing Mystery Funnies #15, Amazing-Man #7, King #44, Superman #2, Feature #26, Champion #2, Detective #33, Ace #32, and Silver Streak #1.



FAWCETT SALUTES THE COLORS! A rare and historic photograph from the Fawcett Distributor (shown on facing page) "W. H. Fawcett, Jr., president of Fawcett Publications, Inc., examines the display of 14 flag covers prepared for July, 1943 Fawcett magazines by Al Allard, art director. It is believed that this is the largest number of flag covers produced by one publishing organization. It represents a [combined] circulation of more than 7,400,000 for the month of July."

KEEP BUYIN' 'EM, BROTHER! The back cover of the Fawcett Distributor (August 1943) is a classic in its own right. Besides the large red "BOOM!" headline reminiscent of comic books, the War Bonds ad shows an actual World War II-vintage US Navy propaganda photo depicting a Navy PC boat destroying an Axis sub with depth charges.



THE MYSTERIOUS "FDC" on the covers of many comics stands for "Fawcett Distributing Corporation," one of the largest periodical distributors of the 1940s. Above, an extremely rare copy of their August, 1943 company magazine. Front cover of the August issue salutes J. Otto Stoll, a prominent Chicago Periodical distributor during WWII.

BOOM!
—AND MORE OF YOUR WAR BONDS HAVE HELPED SINK ANOTHER AXIS SUBMARINE!
Two depth charges explode simultaneously as a spunky little U.S. Navy PC boat launches its deadly attack against an Axis submarine! The pictures tell better than words the power of depth charges. (Official U.S. Navy photograph)
KEEP BUYIN' 'EM, BROTHER!

SIZING UP THE SITUATION

BY TRACEY HEFT

In the course of a comic books' life, a wide variety of damage can occur. One of the first characteristics affected is surface gloss, its intensities diminished from excessive or improper handling or inadequate storage. While books can remain in relatively perfect condition over the span of many years, innumerable books will lose their gloss without any further damage occurring. The gloss that we see is the result of minerals added to the paper sheet (after formation) and is properly known as its 'coating'.

This is not to be confused with sizing, as sizing is a process in paper making whereby materials are added to (and/or on) a paper sheet in order to change its ability to absorb liquids. By decreasing the penetration of a liquid into the paper fibres, the paper's surface becomes more suitable for printing, thus decreasing the problem of ink feathering and 'strike through'. On the other hand, coatings are added to the formed paper sheet in order to change the surface characteristics of the paper, including (but not limited to) surface gloss.

To confuse matters even more, sizing can be added to the paper sheet in one of two stages. When sizing is added prior to sheet formation it is known as internal sizing. When the sizing agent is added onto the already formed paper sheet, it is then known (appropriately enough) as external sizing and/or surface sizing. A common example of an internal sizing agent is the relatively infamous alum/rosin sizing (aluminum sulphate combined with rosin) a major contributor to many of the acidic problems within comic book paper. External size typically consists of starch or gelatin (the main source of protein for many pests and rodents).

When sizing is added prior to sheet formation it is known as internal sizing. When the sizing agent is added onto the already formed paper sheet, it is then known (appropriately enough) as external sizing and/or surface sizing.

As many collectors know, gloss on comic book covers can be altered or even removed through improper storage but overly intrusive conservation treatments will sometimes result in its loss. Further treatment, referred to (incorrectly) as resizing is then implemented.

In restoration labs around North America, resizing treat-

ments are done by applying a substance (usually an adhesive) to the paper sheet. While this application can improve an item's structural integrity (i.e. make the sheet feel stronger or crisper–which is what resizing aims to accomplish), it is also implemented in order to improve the aesthetic appearance by creating a smooth even finish to the item with the added effects of hiding the impact of repair, and inpainting and increasing the surface gloss of the cover (the definition of recoating).

> ...additional treatments should be decided upon by the owner and not solely by the restorer or conservator.

It is hardly ever mentioned that recoating (or for that matter, resizing) is a non-reversible treatment as it mixes and combines with the original coating once applied. Once dry, it cannot be removed without removing all or part of what's left of the original gloss! For this reason, both recoating and resizing are considered non-archival treatments by academically trained paper and archival conservators.

While not immediately obvious to everyone, the ability to reverse a treatment is extremely important. Without the option to reverse a process completely, disaster can (and usually does) occur. For example, indiscriminate use of 'quick fixes' over the last 20 years has resulted in many rare and valuable comic books being damaged or disfigured as spray varnishes and resin varnishes (once thought safe and suitable for the restoration of comic books) have since cross-linked and hardened with age. This cross-linking effect has spelt almost certain doom for the books these products were originally intended to protect. In time, these varnishes become yellow and can discolor (and in some extreme cases–obscure) the cover image. As time continues to progress, only the most powerful (and ultimately–harmful) solvents will remove the recoating, while inevitably removing the original coating and perhaps even the original image layer.

Even more disturbing is the continued use of non-archival varnishes on restored comics. More than a few so-called 'conservators' seem to be using both spray and resin varnishes with little or no regard for the long-term stability of the book, only the aesthetic results. While immediately pleasing to the eye–these books often feel 'waxy', 'hard', or even 'heavy' to the touch. To a novice collector, this tactile deception may go unnoticed, but a more seasoned collector or dealer will pick upon the sensory difference almost immediately. Any books treated in such a manner should perhaps be considered "permanently altered".

When deciding to have a comic restored, it is important for the owner to consider the possibility that the treatment requested might result in supplementary treatments being initiated. These additional treatments should be decided upon by the owner and not solely by the restorer or conservator, thus allowing the owner to make a completely informed decision for the collectible, based upon all of the options presented. It is then the owner's responsibility to ensure that any treatments undertaken by the restorer or conservator, are ultimately harmless for the comic or item in question

In a future issue, Ye Editor has requested that I focus on the general topic of cellophane tape and cellophane tape adhesives. Until then... keep on collecting. ■

50 Years of Scrooge McDuck

A Chronology by Bruce Hamilton

1947
First appearance of Uncle Scrooge McDuck in "Christmas on Bear Mountain" (**Donald Duck FC** #178) The character, created by writer/artist Carl Barks, serves mainly as a throwaway plot device.

1948
Scrooge returns and gains a toehold in the Disney universe, acquiring an ancestral home and history, in "The Old Castle's Secret" (**Donald Duck FC** #189). He also makes his debut in the Donald Duck ten pagers (**WDC&S** #98)

1949
A still formative Scrooge reveals secrets of his early life in "Voodoo Hoodoo" (**Donald Duck Four Color** #238).

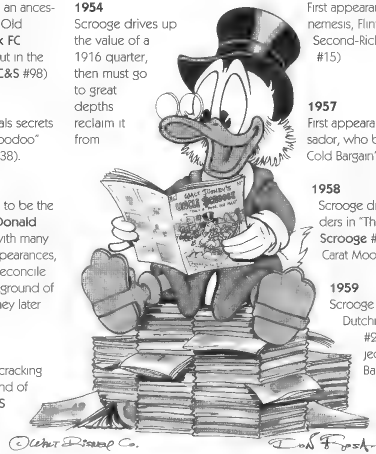
1950
"The Magic Hourglass" proves to be the source of Scrooge's wealth (**Donald Duck Four Color** #291) As with many aspects of Scrooge's early appearances, this becomes a challenge to reconcile with the personality and background of the World's Richest Duck as they later develop

1951
First appearances of the safe-cracking Beagle Boys (**WDC&S** #134) and of Scrooge's money bin (**WDC&S** #135)

1952
First Scrooge comic book, "Only a Poor Old Man" (**Uncle Scrooge Four Color** #386). Simultaneously, Scrooge locks horns with the Maharajah of Howduyustan (**WDC&S** #138), establishes pioneer Cornelius Coot as the founder of Duckburg, Madcap inventor Gyro Gearloose, long-time Uncle Scrooge backup star, makes his debut (**WDC&S** #140).

1953
First appearances of Scrooge's old flame Glittering Goldie in "Back to the Klondike" (**Uncle Scrooge Four Color** #456, her only appearance in a Barks story) and of his Old Number One dime (**Uncle Scrooge Four Color** #495)

1954
Scrooge drives up the value of a 1916 quarter, then must go to great depths reclaim it from



The World's Richest Duck enjoying his 50 year run of Scrooge stories. Art by Don Rosa.

Atlantis (**Uncle Scrooge** #5). Scrooge seeks serenity by parachuting into fabled Tralla La (**Uncle Scrooge** #6) He and his nephews also discover the Seven Cities of Cibola (**Uncle Scrooge** #7).

1955
The Disney Studio invites Carl Barks to script a Scrooge cartoon. Though the project is later abandoned, Scrooge makes his first television appearance on October 3 in the animated titles for the Mickey Mouse Club show.

1956
First appearance of Scrooge's archnemesis, Flintheart Glomgold, "The Second-Richest Duck" (**Uncle Scrooge** #15)

1957
First appearance of a Brutopian ambassador, who bids against Scrooge for "A Cold Bargain" (**Uncle Scrooge** #17).

1958
Scrooge discovers rich natural wonders in "The Golden River" (**Uncle Scrooge** #22) and "The Twenty-four Carat Moon" (**Uncle Scrooge** #23)

1959
Scrooge tracks down "The Flying Dutchman" (**Uncle Scrooge** #25), subsequently the subject of four oil paintings by Barks.

1960
Scrooge stars in his only two storybooks drawn by Barks. "Uncle Scrooge the Lemonade King" (**Top Top Tales** #2465) and "Donald Duck and the Christmas Carol" (**Little Golden Book** D84)

1961
Dell Publishing manufactures the first American Uncle Scrooge toy, a rubber savings bank.

1962
First appearance of the sorceress Magica de Spell, who covets Scrooge's Number One dime in "The Midas Touch" (**Uncle Scrooge** #36)

1963
The best-selling Disney comic book, Uncle Scrooge switches from a quarterly to bimonthly publication with issue #40, testifying to the magazine's popularity.

1964
Scrooge embarks on "The Loony Lunar Gold Rush" (**Uncle Scrooge** #49) in a parody of Robert W. Service's Klondike ballad, "The Shooting of Dan McGrew."

1965
First appearance of one of Scrooge's oldest enemies, Soapy Slick, in "North of the Yukon" (**Uncle Scrooge** #59)

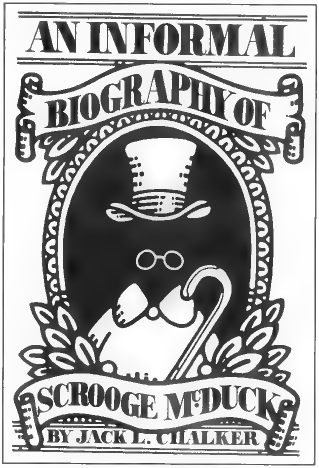
1966
Barks retires from regular comic book work, leaving "King Scrooge the First" (**Uncle Scrooge** #71) to be drawn by Tony Strobl.

1967
Scrooge's first theatrical film ("Uncle Scrooge and Money") is released on March 23.

1968
In his first published interview, Barks discusses Scrooge's origins: "I kind of liked old Scrooge, and he filled a gap" (**Comic Art** #7).

1969
Barks begins to sell original ink art from **Uncle Scrooge** #60-63, adding a new dimension to Scrooge collecting.

1970
Robert Overstreet's **Comic Book Price Guide** No. 1 documents the secondary market values of old Uncle Scrooge comic books Barks begins to script (though not draw) Junior Woodchuck stories costarring Scrooge with "Peril of the Black Forest" (**Huey, Dewey and Louie Junior Woodchucks** #6)



Jack Chalker's Informal Biography of Scrooge McDuck published in 1974. This scarce book has become a Scrooge collectible in its own right. (VALUE: **$75-150 for a mid grade copy**)

1971
First Scrooge painting by Barks ("Money Lake") recreates in fully rendered dimensions the cover art from the first Uncle Scrooge comic (**Uncle Scrooge Four Color** #386).

1972
First money bin painting by Barks, "Pleasure in the Treasure."

1973
First Klondike painting by Barks "The Goose Egg Nugget" and arguably his finest painting featuring Uncle Scrooge, "This Dollar Saved my Life at Whitehorse", a critically acclaimed money bin

1974
Jack L. Chalker publishes **An Informal Biography of Scrooge McDuck** (Baltimor*e: Mirage Press), working events from the Scrooge stories into a coherent timeline.

1975
Barks paints "The Expert" a definitive miniature portrait of Scrooge that will be recreated twenty years later as an English bone china figurine.

1976
Barks paints his most ambitious oil to date, "July Fourth in Duckburg", featuring Scrooge, the Duck family and — for the first and only time — numerous real-life collectors. The picture sells at auction for $6,400, a record high price at the time

1977
The **Comic Book Price Guide** No. 7 runs an illustrated feature on "Carl Barks — From Burbank to Calisota" by E.B. Boatner, illustrated by a gallery of oils, twelve of them featuring Uncle Scrooge.

1978
The start of an international reawakening of interest in Scrooge McDuck, as book deals are negotiated in Europe and the United States. Barks privately questions new characterizations of Scrooge in Italian comics.

1979
First hardbound anthology of Scrooge comics in America, **The Best of Uncle Scrooge** (New York: Abbeville Press).

1980
Barks paints "Wanderers of Wonderlands", his first Scrooge oil specifically intended for reproduction as a lithograph (a miniature), to be included in a Scrooge book published the following year

1981
Two limited edition art books featuring Scrooge are published simultaneously in the fall. **The Fine Art of Walt Disney's Donald Duck**, which launches Another Rainbow and reproduces 122 Barks oils. **Uncle Scrooge McDuck: His Life and Times** (Celestial Arts) collects ten classic stories and prints the first new Scrooge adventure by Barks in fifteen years, "Go Slowly, Sands of Time" (a text story with illustrations).

1982
"Sailing the Spanish Main" inaugurates Another Rainbow's series of limited edition Barks lithographs. For this print, Barks reworked one of his most famous comic covers to include Scrooge

1983
Scrooge stars in the animated feature film "Mickey's Christmas Carol", released on December 16.

1984
The first set of Uncle Scrooge comic reprints is published as Set III of the hardbound **Carl Barks Library**

1985
Gladstone Publishing launches a new line of Disney comic books with **Uncle Scrooge Goes to Disneyland** and **Disneyland Birthday Party**, both featuring classic Scrooge tales by Barks.

1986
First American printing of a European-produced Scrooge story, "The Robot Raiders of Magica de Spell" (**Uncle Scrooge** #210)

1987
First Scrooge story by Don Rosa, "The Son of the Sun" (**Uncle Scrooge** #219), a sequel to the classic Barks Donald Duck adventure "Lost in the Andes." "Sport Goofy in Soccermania," an unreleased theatrical cartoon produced in 1984 and starring a pre-DuckTales Scrooge, finally sees the light of day as a TV special. DuckTales, an animated television series inspired by the Scrooge comics, airs its pilot episode on September 18. Gladstone launches a new Scrooge comic book title, **Uncle Scrooge Adventures**, and celebrates Scrooge's fortieth birthday by publishing the commemorative book **Uncle Scrooge in Color**. Capping a very busy year, Scrooge is featured in the first volume of Gladstone's first series of comic albums

1988
First Scrooge story by William Van Horn, "Floating Alone" (**Uncle Scrooge Adventures** #6). Gladstone's DuckTales comic, based on the animated series, begins. Walt Disney World builds a replica of Duckburg, complete with Scrooge's statue of Duckburg's founder Cornelius Coot and a sign listing McDuck as President of the "Billionaire's Club "

1989
Martin Barker publishes **Comics: Ideology, Power and the Critics** (Manchester University Press), the first academic study to devote a chapter to Scrooge.

1990
DuckTales: The Movie: The Secret of the Lost Lamp, a theatrical film based on the TV show, is released on August 3.

1991
Escorted by Disneyland's costumed Uncle Scrooge, Barks receives the Disney Legends Award on October 22.

1992
"Always Another Rainbow," the first limited edition porcelain figurine of Scrooge, and "The Scrooge McDuck Midnight Egg," a jeweled Theo Fabergé sculpture inspired by the Barks painting "In the Cave of Ali Baba", are released by Another Rainbow.

1993
Reemergence of Gladstone as the publisher of **Uncle Scrooge** comics after a three-year hiatus, during which Disney comics were produced by the Walt Disney Company. Gladstone also revives **Uncle Scrooge Adventures**, a title Disney did not publish.

1994
Rosa's twelve-chapter epic, "The Life and Times of Scrooge McDuck," begins its American serialization (**Uncle Scrooge** #285). Illuminating the past of the World's Richest Duck on the comic book page with unprecedented depth, breadth, affection, and attention to detail, the series receives plaudits from around the world and goes on to win the 1995 Will Eisner Comics Industry Award for Best Serialized Story

1995
First American printing of "Horsing Around with History" (**Uncle Scrooge Adventures** #33), a new Scrooge adventure written by Barks and drawn by William Van Horn.

1996
Uncle Scrooge Adventures comic albums begin a complete full color chronological printing of Barks' Scrooge tales with accompanying trading cards. Rosa's "The Life and Times of Scrooge McDuck" series also issued in album form, the four volumes accompanied by the first-ever Rosa drawn trading cards.

1997
Carl Barks' Scrooge painting "The Expert" is issued as a porcelain figurine and a lithograph by Another Rainbow Gladstone collects Don Rosa's first two years of Scrooge stories into four comic albums. ■

This was originally published on the Bruce Hamilton Company web site which can be accessed at: www.hamlco.com

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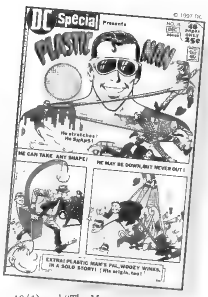
DC Special presents
PLASTIC MAN
HE CAN TAKE ANY SHAPE!
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EXTRA! PLASTIC MAN'S PAL, WOODY WOMEN, IN A SOLO STORY! (It's alright, Ned!)

Your Honor, if it pleases the court, I'd like to start this month's column off by asking the readers to act as judge and jury to the following question (and maybe start up a healthy debate in the process).

What company, editor or studio, assembled the greatest group of artistic talent and when? Was it Bill Gaines and EC Comics? Perhaps during the 1950s it was National, with its staff of Infantino, Anderson, Toth, Kubert and Kane (as well as many others). Dell's humor line during the 1940s was loaded with talent (Barks, Kelly, Noonan, Gottfredson, Stanley etc...). The possibilities are almost as varied as the fans of comics themselves, but for the sake of argument (and so I can get to an index), in my opinion no other company in history comes close to the Quality Comics Group during the 1940s... and here's why...

- Will Eisner (A living legend!)
- Lou Fine (Has there ever been anyone better?)
- Reed Crandall (Simply incredible!)
- Bill Ward (A master!)
- Then there's McWilliams, Gustavson, Fox, and Powell
- And last, but by no means least... Jack Cole, whose list of credits is amazing, but none more so than his work on Plastic Man!

You can browse this and past issues of Comic Book Marketplace your Honor, and see the incredible art of many of Quality's artists reproduced, but unlike Fine or Ward, Cole's work must be seen in the context of a story to fully appreciate his genius!

So I have compiled the following list of ten Plastic Man reprints as evidence to support my case:

Detective Comics #441 (Jun/Jul 1974, DC) reprints: "The Killing of Snoopy Hawks" (12 pgs.) from *Plastic Man* #3 (Spring 1946)

Plastic Man #11 (1964, Super Reprint) reprints: "Gazelle Van Gonder" (12 pgs.) from *Plastic Man* #16 (Mar 1949)

DC Special #15 (Nov/Dec 1971, DC) reprints: "Plastic Man Products" (10 pgs.) from *Plastic Man* #17 (May 1949)

Jimmy Olsen #150 (Jun 1972, DC) reprints: "Sadly-Sadly" (13 pgs.) from *Plastic Man* #20 (Nov 1949)

Plastic Man #16 (1964, Super Reprint) reprints: "Kra Vashnu" (13 pgs.) and "Where Is Amorpho" (11 pgs.) from *Plastic Man* #21 (Jan 1950)

DC Special #15 (Nov/Dec 1971, DC) reprints: "The Magic Cup" (8 pgs.) from *Plastic Man* #25 (Sep 1950)

DC Special #15 (Nov/Dec 1971, DC) reprints: "The Origin Of Plastic Man" (6 pgs) from *Police Comics* #1 (Aug 1941) and "The Man Who Can't Be Harmed" (13 pgs.) from *Police Comics* #13 (Nov 1942)

Batman #238 (Jan 1972, DC) reprints: *Police Comics* #14 (Dec 1942)

Jimmy Olsen #149 (May 1972, DC) reprints: "Oh, Plastic Man!" (13 pgs.) and "Case Of The Ancient Clues" (15 pgs.) from Police Comics #75 (Feb 1948)

Plastic Man #18 (1964, Super Reprint) reprints: "Wanted Dead, Not Alive: Plastic Man" (13 pgs.) from *Police Comics* #95 (Oct 1949)

So there you have it, and after informing all you *CBM* readers of the quality of Quality, the prosecution rests. Can anyone out there accuse another company of being as guilty of having so much talent at one time? Column Adjourned! ■

References: Golden Age Directory by Peter Lust. Steven R. Johnson, and Lou Mougin; Overstreet Comic Book Price Guide

by Shawn Hamilton, Great Escape - Louisville, Kentucky

Bill Howard

Otherwise Near Mint!

Nothing else in our hobby is as likely to arouse deep passions as the grading of a comic book. After all, trying to convey attributes that are essentially aesthetically based is no mean feat. We all have different notions of what constitutes beauty and grade. That's why, flawed though they may be, the few attempts to codify grading (specifically the *Overstreet Price Guide*, and *Overstreet and Carter's Comic Book Grading Guide*) are seminal efforts. They are important first steps on the long road to getting us all to use and understand the same language through a thorough examination and review of written and graphical definitions.

That being said (and this being CBM Forum), nothing jerks my chain more than some of the recent and, lamentably, growing attempts to describe otherwise lower grade books in high grade terms. Here's a great example taken recently from a mail order ad in a well-known publication:

"*Silver Surfer* #4, Thor crossover and low distribution in some areas makes this a tough book to find in grade. VG book would be NM if not for front cover subscription crease."

Huh? A VG book that would be NM except for its subscription crease? This is a VG book, plain and simple. OK, I can buy into the idea that the seller is trying to describe a book that had a lot going for it, spoiled primarily by the subscription crease And his or her attempt to educate the buyer about why the book is considered collectible in the first place (Thor crossover, low distribution) is laudable. If you read the copy, though, you'd think the book had metamorphosed into something else–specifically a high grade book.

It all comes together when you see the price being charged. At the time this ad was placed the VG cost for a copy of *Silver Surfer* #4 was $115 or so. The NM price was $390. The cost of the book in the ad was $290, fully 75% of the NM price, and clearly a stretch for this book in this condition. I have to wonder. Did the seller price this book according to its actual VG grade? Or did he, instead, price it according to his description of "...would be NM. . .'?

The most comon example of trying to describe a lower grade book in high grade terms is the notorious split grade (GD/VG, VG/FN, FN/VF, VF/NM, NM/M). Despite the hollow bleating of "split graders" to the contrary, the main reason split grades are promulgated by sellers is to jack the price up. It has nothing to do with finding a comfortable place between grades as some advocates of the practice have suggested. These same advocates ludicrously defend themselves by retreating to the notion that buyers all "know" what a–say–VF/NM book is, as if the mere addition of a slash (/) between the VF and the NM carries magical powers of description. It doesn't, and buyers can't be expected to tacitly discern the differences

I recently undertook my own, and admittedly anecdotal, survey of split grade pricing. I randomly selected a dozen examples from a half dozen catalogues, published by mail order dealers. What I found was troubling. In 11 out of 12 instances the asking price was closer to the higher grade. In only one instance was it reflective of the lower grade. It doesn't take a genius to conclude that these dealers engaged in a willful effort to command higher prices on lower grade books. Some people call this practice "price gouging". I'll leave it to you to draw your own conclusions.

What makes it especially easy to split a grade and charge a higher price is the fact that split grades are not given definition anywhere in the literature, most notably *Overstreet's Price Guide*, and Overstreet and Carter's collaboratively wrought *Grading Guide*. So what you say? What difference does it make that neither of these books defines or endorses split grading? It makes all the difference in the world. The first step in the ultimate acceptance of any grading guide is clear and concise descriptions. In fact, the only reason the split grade exists is because the nomenclature grades to either side of the slash (/) have been so fully described. Only through a thorough examination of definitions can we subject a grading guide to the intense scrutiny and debate it deserves. If grading descriptions are left to our imaginations, as individuals, than chaos is all we can expect.

That's why, admirable and honest attempts though they may be, I can't give any credence to proprietary grading guides created by dealers and grading services. A proprietary grading guide, maintained in secrecy, is no grading guide at all. It is subject to the whim and fancy of its author. Publication, followed by repeated, skeptical inquiry, is the only way to insure its ultimate acceptance and validity.

So what do we do? I'll admit that publishing a guide to grading is an expensive proposition, although the Internet has certainly made the dissemination of information to a great number of people much easier. First, we should insist on using full grades with the traditional plus and minus where warranted. I say take a stand. If you really think, as a seller/dealer, that your book belongs in the near mint range, say so. A NM- or a VF+ says a lot more about a book than a VF/NM, and also helps to prescribe the dollar range a seller can charge. I might be willing to pay double guide for a NM- *Mystery in Space* #75, but not for a VF+ copy of the same book.

I can already hear the split graders and the "...otherwise near minters" bemoaning the loss of their favorite price escalator. And, admittedly, my VF+ may not be your VF+. Doesn't matter. With experience comes familiarity. I pretty much know what the grading range will be on books I purchase from dealers with whom I do business regularly. I suppose I might feel less passionately about the issue if grades weren't the springboard to pricing. But they are, so I always look for consistency. The unknown between a VF/NM and a VF+ or NM- is, in my experience, always greater. I say toss out the likes of the split grade, and... "otherwise near mint."

Dwayne Wilder

What happens now?

Marvel Comics filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy protection last December 1996. What a shock! I realize it appeared to be part of a plan but it still hurts nonetheless.

Of course, when Marvel filed, I felt they lost all control of their destiny. Now, federal bankruptcy court could determine what happens and who gets which rights to what... if any.

During all of this chaos, what does a comic reader/collector do? Do you "collect" the character or do you stay true to Marvel? What a dilemma for a "Marvel Zombie" like me! I personally can't imagine reading Image or London Night. I can probably do DC, but only because they have been around since I started collecting. These young companies have no history with me. I did not grow up with them! They may be good but I have no loyalty or passion for them. For me, it's not such an easy question. Maybe I'm making too much of it (especially since nothing has happened yet) but it's how I feel! The Marvel Universe and the Marvel staff (from Stan Lee, Jack Kirby, and Roy Thomas to Mark Gruenwald, J.D. DeMatteis, Ann Nocenti and Larry Hama) have meant so much to me over the decades.

I know it's a fictional universe but it was there when I could use this incredible imagination of mine! During those early years with Marvel, it was the only place I had. As a preteen, there weren't many outlets. Sure, I read novels and short stories, was in school plays and sang in church choirs but there was nothing like the Marvel Universe.

Back then, the Bullpen was so good! They would relate to the readers through the Bullpen Bulletins. They answered our letters on the Letters Page (including some from Roy Thomas, Mark Gruenwald and John Marc DeMatteis!). And once, I received a personal response concerning a letter I wrote about Steve Rogers giving up Captain America's uniform the first time.

It's not so simple to follow characters to their new home. I don't know what I'll do. I will wait for the proceedings to see what has happened. The hardest part of witnessing the "possible end" of the Marvel Universe is the young readers. I feel sad to think they might not have a great place to take their imagination. Or have a staff which brings a company to life! To me and countless others, Marvel is this and more.

Ask the writer/artist/inker/letterer/colorist of today what they read as kids. In my opinion, it was probably Marvel Comics. Why? More than likely, it was that special sense of "We're in this together" that Stan Lee and the Bullpen espoused. No, lived! They were just incredible! The creative side drove the business side.

Now, the bean counters and corporate takeover agents run the show. It's just another business. Today, the violent, dark tone of comics in general has played right into the "How much money can we make?" syndrome. ("Yes! Let's put a foil enhanced, glow in the dark cover on every issue this month!")

I realize Marvel has been right there (i.e. the Punisher) but in the '60s and '70s, the tone wasn't so "mean or gruesome". All readers, I believe, want a return to the "gentler, kinder" era. A great example is *DareDevil*! I read the latest issue after a five year layoff. Karl Kesel and Cary Nord are working wonders with the same character Frank Miller "darkened" in the '80s. It is fun to read! Another example is *Untold Tales of Spider-Man*. Kurt Busiek is having a blast with the Stan Lee/Steve Ditko Spidey! I think it is easily the best comic produced today!

In short I was stunned (and I'm still stunned) at the thought that Marvel and the Marvel Universe might actually be gone... forever. ■

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Conservative Guide increases stimulate collector demand

With "The Big Book" in hand, the marketplace now proceeds into our fiscal year of comic books sales. While each of us may have a different interpretation of the Annual Guide, most feedback to date has been favorable. Some may want their books to skyrocket, while others hope for stable or even falling prices on items still on their want list. Objectively, it looks like everyone got a little of both. And like last month, the flurry of buying and trading that follows the new Guide is in full swing… and seems to be continuing (in some specific areas) at most of the "season opener" conventions.

Pre Golden Age/Golden Age (1933-45)

While Timelys and top dollar DCs at multiples may have leveled off a bit, there is still a great deal of interest in these books at Guide. Even though quite a few issues can bring over Guide, the numbers seem to be dwindling. In contrast (and somewhat amazingly) 1930s-1950s lower and mid-grade books are selling very well at multiples of GD, VG, and FN, depending upon the book of course. Feedback indicates that plenty of collectors that gravitated into Gold just as the prices began to skyrocket, have decided to stick around regardless of grades. We saw this with Silver some time back, and just like then, collectors seem fairly immune to market fluctuations when it come to books they really want.

Sales: Bulletman #1 FN- $900; Exciting Comics #9 FN $2,300; Jackpot #4 FN+ $795; More Fun #73 FR $800; Catman #16 GD $70; OK Comics #1 VG/FN $300; Smash Comics #14 VG $525; Key Comics #1 VF $140; Submariner #7 FN $535; New Comics #2 FR $728; Top Notch #8 VG $415; Amazing Man #1 GD- $1,450; Batman #5 VG++ $1,100; Captain Aero #3 FN $195; Detective Comics #35 GD $1,000; Ace Comics #11 appVG $350.

Post Golden Age/Pre Silver Age (1946-56)

Try to find precode horror, Good Girl, Matt Baker, Kubert, or those pre-hero DCs and Atlas books at prices even close to Guide… you won't. I believe that material from this era will be the foundation for the hobby's real growth in the next year. Guide prices are still extremely low in many cases, and certain books at multiples of Guide are seen as a bargain. Also, new discoveries abound, and that is also driving collector interest and demand.

Sales: Buster Crabb #1 VF $245; Hickory #1 VF/NM $165; Nellie The Nurse #9 NM $135; Romantic Secrets #1 VF $125; Exciting Comics #37 NM $550; Here's Howie #1 FN $98; Katy Keene Annual #1 VF/NM $450; Seven Seas #4 GD $180; Startling #48 VF/NM $600; Terrific #4 GD $350; Sugar and Spike #1 GD $165; Bobby Benson's #9 FN $75; Bingo #1 VF/NM $200; Crime Smashers #1 VG+ $200.

Silver Age (1956-69)

The market is definitely firming up as more and more collectors return to the fold. In addition, this genre is the leading area for new collectors to enter the hobby. I've spoken with more and more first time collectors that are looking to pick up titles from their youth, like Spider-Man, F.F, and Batman. As the renewed focus on Silver slowly expands, it will likely remain an area that still offers a huge quantity of mid to low grade material which sells for deep discounts. But as always, this is not true for high grade. The demand and price for this material (especially for white-paged copies published before 1964) just keeps going through the roof.

Sales: Tales of Suspense #39 GD+ $420; Plastic Man #1 NM $65; Batman #181 VF/NM $140; Marvel Tales #158 FN $55; Leave it to Binky #71 NM $25; Kid Colt #79 VF $40; Brave & Bold #25 VG $95; Amazing Spider-Man #1 GD *Continued on page 71*

GREG WHITE
17 W MONUMENT AVENUE
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Hello! Welcome to the land of Mickey and Donald! Our weather is beautiful and our sales have picked up in recent weeks. We have seen more tourist sales as of late and have been able to move products via mail order. We still have to discount most books but have tried to allow for that by paying a little less for collections

After reviewing the latest Overstreet Annual Price Guide, I feel most of the prices on Silver Age products are not attainable. I also think we are at the point where some big changes are necessary. For instance, I suggest that the near mint value for comics from 1935-1949 be eliminated, and let VF be the top grade and price. If a dealer has a Golden Age book that is truly near mint (unrestored) they are going to charge way over Guide anyway. I would say that 98% of the Golden Age books that are brought into our store as part of collections are below NM. The Guide should reflect that.

Also, we are at the point where a price listing for restored books from 1935-1963 is needed. Not all titles would be listed but a start in the right direction would include DC, Fawcett and Timely Golden Age, followed by Silver Age keys. There are many restored comic books popping up on the market and this would help.

Continued on page 71

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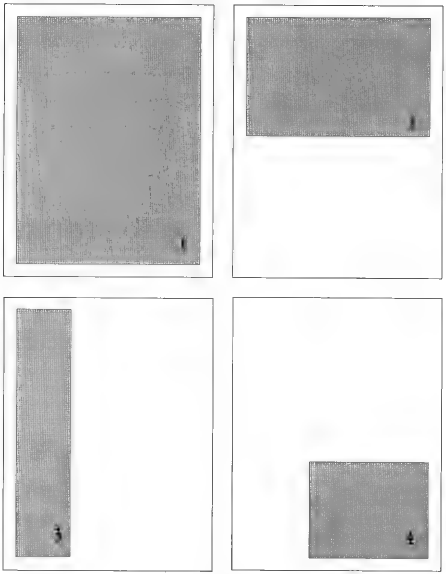

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Continued from page 68

Silver Age (1956-69)

We had numerous sales this month. Store and mail order sales were the story. We sold both high and low grade books. DC was our top seller followed by Marvel.

Sales: Amazing Spider-Man #9 VF $450; Metal Men #1 VF/NM $295; Action #265 VG $49; Flash Annual #1 VG $50; Fantastic Four #6 VG $150; Superman #95 GD $30.

Golden Age (1935-55)

Demand continues for issues that very seldom come in. We did purchase a full run of the super hero title, Comic Cavalcade, in average VG condition. Squarebounds have always sold well for us. A small group of late '40's Superman, Action, and Adventure came in also. Sales were decent this month. Mostly lower grade books. For us, Golden Age comics sell closer to Guide and are easier to move than Silver Age.

Sales: Superman #33 GD $125; Comic Cavalcade #12 VG $150, Batman #11 VG $1,195; Daredevil #37 VG $35.

Disneyana, Toys, and Artwork

An active area! We purchased original 1960's Marvel art this month. Also a nice group of Disney animation art came in. This has allowed us to restock in this area. We also had a group of Aurora model kits and a couple of Capt. Action toys come in. They usually sell quicker than we can replace them.

Sales: Baloo animation drawing $50, Batman Aurora model in box $250, Mickey Mouse BLB $40, Alex Raymond Secret X-9 daily $1,200.

That will wrap our month. Have a great spring! When visiting the Walt Disney World area please stop by and say hello. Take care. ■

Collectors should note that the opinions expressed in CBM Market Reports are solely those of the individual dealers and collectors who contribute them. Seasoned hobbyists are acutely aware that prices vary based on geographic location, time of year, and a number of other marketplace factors.

SCHIFFMAN MARKET REPORT CONT.

$1,000; The Avengers #1 FR $120; Silver Surfer #1 NM/M $600; X-Men #14 NM $300; Wonder Woman #128 NM $65; Showcase #4 FR $700; Richie Rich #1 FN $450; Mystical Tales #1 FN $185; JLA #1 VF $2,000; Green Lantern #2 NM $1,000; Doctor Strange #169 GD $25; Blackhawk #164 VF/NM $65.

Bronze Age (1970-79)

As new record prices are being set for certain issues (especially sales above the $100 mark), more and more attention is brought to bear on early 1970s titles. Rarity and affordability is driving this part of the market along with a small but growing segment that is looking for material to read. Also of note, the ever-increasing demand for obscure Charlton and Gold Key titles is cracking this piece of the market wide open, and is second only to the post Gold/pre Silver market for intensity. Strong interest continues for the DC and Marvel gothic-horror reprints and originals, along with the DC war titles. Additionally, there has been huge jumps in demand and price for DC 100 page books (especially the more obscure titles), with low-Guide-value high-grade copies bringing as much as 5 to 10 times Guide, in some cases. (The "DC 100 pager phenomenon" is also occurring with mid to late Silver issues as well.)

Sales: Adventure Comics #432 VF/NM $12; Weird War #1 VF/NM $125; Super DC Spectacular S-14 FN $10; DC 100 page Super Spectacular #20 NM $35; Night Nurse #4 NM $40; Marvel Spotlight #2 FN $22\ The Invaders #1 NM $18; Underdog #1 VF/NM $70; Superfriends #1 NM $20; Conan #23 VF/NM $22; Daredevil #81 VF/NM $25; Ringo Kid #1 NM $14; The Avengers #83 NM $20; Conan #1 VF/NM $150; X-Men #94 NM $475; Supergirl #1 VF/NM $15; L.H. Laurel and Hardy #1 VF $40; Ghosts #1 NM $40; Lois Lane #105 NM $18; Werewolf By Night #32 NM $85.

Other Stuff

With the growing interest in the comic "peripherals", I thought I would put together sales of a few comic related items of interest. Superman Gum Card VF/NM $45; The Incredible Hulk Hardcover VF/NM $80; Jack Kirby Sketchbook SC FN $35; Incredible Hulk Towel Set NM $35; Mars Attacks Card Set NM $40 ea; Amazing Spider-Man Vitamin Ring NM $140; Batman, Joint Action Figure NM $42.

The new Guide

There were a few collectors and dealers hoping for another huge price increase in this year's Guide. But at the same time, most want (even demand?) the Overstreet Guide to stay relevant to the market… and for that to happen it must often look further down the road than those of us wheeling and dealing everyday on the short term. Although I feel more of the high demand/classic cover books should be broken out and differentially priced… and there should be more dynamic pricing for many of the 1946-56 books. But in general, the new Guide makes progress in most areas… and the color cover reproductions were the best ever.

Books that still Guide way below market value…

- Super DC Giant S13 (Leave It To Binky)
- LH Laurel & Hardy #1
- Homer The Happy The Ghost (any)
- Star Spangled War Stories #51 (1st Unknown Soldier)
- DC 100 Page Super Spectacular #20 (Golden Age Batman Reprints)
- Seven Seas #4 and 6 (huge demand for these issues)
- Young Men #27 and 28 (easily the hardest to find of the 23 Marvel/Atlas "last hurrah" issues)
- Detective #122 (1st Catwoman cover)
- Our Army at War #83 (this isn't news, but what is amazing is the number of non-DC war collectors that want this book)
- Brave & Bold #45-49 (Strange Sports Stories) ■

MARKETPLACE MAIL

Continued from page 9

the most truly frightening comics ever produced), Alarming Tales #1, by Harvey (another one that scared me), and Tales From the Tomb, by Dell. These three comics still get me, all these years later.

Some comics from the "Bronze Age" deserve my recommendation, also: The Jonny Quest series from Comico (especially issue #21!). The Normalman series from Renegade. "Aida-Zee" an odd independent comic put out in the 1980s. I only have the first issue, but the art and stories are excellent, albeit eclectic.

Man-Thing series from Marvel–these have a bad rep because of the investment speculation snafu at this time, but I still think they were excellent I even liked the Howard the Duck spin-off series. Forget the hype and enjoy these cheap reads.

I also enjoyed the Marvel magazines that came out in the later 1970s–Conan, Tales of the Zombie, etc.

The "Blood of the Innocent" mini-series by WaRP is very good!

Others of note–Alien Worlds & Twisted Tales by Pacific, E-Man by First, and the Fred Hembeck books by Fantaco. These Bronze Age comics are plentiful and cheap and really a good time!

To end this, I'd like to mention a couple of comics I'd like to get again, but have no idea what comic or issue #s they are: One was an issue of an Archie title from the '60s (maybe Life With Archie?), in which Archie and the gang do a take-off on "Journey to the Center of the Earth", in a book length story. Archie may have been "Pureheart" in the story. I'd really appreciate it if someone could identify this comic for me.

A second item was maybe a one page "true" account of coal miners being menaced by a caveman or some other subterranean cave dweller. It seems it was supposedly an account that happened in Germany?

While my memory is primed, does anyone remember a movie called "The Earth Dies Screaming", and where I might buy a copy? How about "Zechariah" (the "first electric western"). Wasn't Don Johnson in this? Who played the lead?

And finally, am I crazy or was there a black and white TV show called "Great Ghost Stories"? These all scared the dickens out of me. I remember really scary dramatizations of "The Monkey's Paw" and "The Wendigo" where the final scene is of a man eating the moss off the side of a tree–the Wendigo was never shown, but its voice could be heard to moan, "Oh, my burning feet of fire" or something like that. I'd really like to see these again!

That's all. I hope I sparked some pleasant memories or made some recommendations for some missed gems. Thanks again for a great magazine and the memories!

Rolf Gerdau, Nebraska

The first fine MAD *paperbacks were published by Ballantine and contained reprints of the comics (*MAD *#1-23). After that,* MAD *paperbacks were published by Signet and reprinted material from* MAD *magazine (*MAD *#24-up)*

Kelly Freas

This is in response to one of your letter writers. Bill Barber was looking for information on Alan Light and his Flashback series. Unfortunately, I do not know its history, although I do have the first three issues of his Buyers Guide which Krause Pubs. bought from him and is still published today, as everyone knows. Bill Barber might get in touch with the publication as they may or have information he is looking for.

I've petitioned a few publications about doing an interview with Kelly Freas and his days with MAD No one has ever quizzed him about those beautiful covers and satirical ads he did. It might be a nice piece to compliment the new MAD reprints coming soon.

Mike Roberts, Oklahoma

Mail from Mad Mona

March issue #45: The "Justice League of America" articles, color photo covers and memorabilia was truly a treat this time. Enjoyed the article on "Seven Soldiers of Victory" and thanks for running those 14 photo covers of Leading. Each month the articles and those wonderful photo covers are an additional treat.

Maybe one day someone may do an article on "Supersnipe"–the boy with the most comic books in the world. It was a fun type of comic book. I think the main character was Koppy McFad (this I'm not sure of because time has a way to play tricks with the mind). Again, it would be nice to see some of those photo covers. Have a great day. Thanks.

Mad Mona, Texas

Info for Michelle Nolan

I borrowed a Curly Kayoe #4 from an LA-area collector and copied the cover and indicia (on page 3, counting the cover as page 1) hoping it's relevant to your research work. Interestingly, the inside front and inside back covers are blank (No, he did not have a #3.) If further info would help, please let me know.

P.S. In years of looking, I've never come

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across a 3-Dell #2 either, nor an (Al Capp's) Dogpatch #4! (though #4 has been listed by Overstreet for years along with the often seen #71, #2 and #3).

Ed Buchman, California

Help needed in Kansas

Really enjoyed your article on the Justice League of America, but what I was writing to ask is, why did the pre-1971 DC Comics have the Superman DC/National Comics logo (circular slug)? I didn't know that DC had so many names, but why was Superman's name put on the circular slug?

And finally, why did Harvey Comics list Casper, Wendy, and Baby Huey under the copyright credits 'Harvey Famous Cartoons', while Hot Stuff and Richie Rich was credited as 'Harvey Features Syndicate'. I hope someone can help me with all this confusion.

Gene Evans, Kansas

I think it was because the publisher felt that the name "Superman" was a more identifiable trade name to new readers than "DC". As for your Harvey question, I don't know. I'm hoping Mark Arnold (the editor of the Harveyville Fun Times fanzine) does know, and will write to tell us all the answer. Excellent questions Gene.

Something Strange

Wanted to tell you guys about something strange that happened to me at my comic book store the other day.

I had just walked in to pick up my usual load of comics for the month. In my file were a dozen or so comics, and CBM #44. I immediately placed CBM on the top of the stack, then went home to start reading.

It was after I got home and started reading that I realized what was strange. Of all my time collecting comics, never has a magazine been my favorite monthly publication. Sure, it is a comic book magazine, but I look forward to it more than any of the comics that come out nowadays. Your product has been nothing less than excellent since I started reading it.

Now, a couple of questions: 1) I admit I am in a bit of a withdrawal stage for one of my favorite titles, Captain America. Due to current changes made at Marvel, I haven't read Cap for quite a while. Do you think you could help, and run an article on Cap when he was in his good days? 2) I would like to enter your contests, but the fine print says 'must use this original coupon'. You should know that all of us who read your mag have such a love for comics and comic magazines that we would rather take a beating than deface one of our precious books. Is there any way we could enter without cutting up our prized issues of CBM?

By the way, hope to see you guys up at the Chicago Comic Con this summer. I want another special comicon edition of CBM!

Seth Jones, Kansas

(1) A Cap issue of CBM is in the planning stages right now. If any collectors would like to contribute, give a jingle... (619) 437-1996. (2) It's actually nice to know that there is general reluctance to cut up CBM issues, even if it means not entering the free prize drawings.

What were they thinking?

I enjoy Michelle Nolan's column in CBM a lot. It's usually the first one I check out when I get a new issue. I especially recall a column Michelle did on obscure Charlton titles. I think she mentioned "Frank Merriwell at Yale" and asked "what were they thinking?" I have a couple of those and I remember thinking the same thing the first time I saw that title.

I'm writing about Ms. Nolan's column in the March issue about possibly non-existent titles. I've had a Range Busters #1 for several years. I've never seen any later issues.

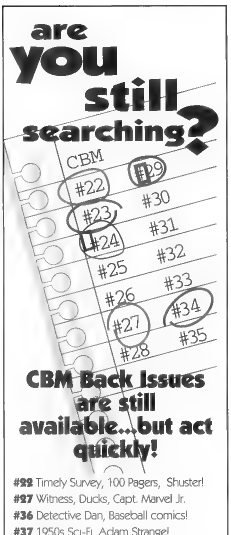
I'm enclosing photocopies of the cover and inside front cover. It's nice to know I have something unusual.

An Ohio Collector

Ross Andru

First off, I would like to say that CBM is an educational resource, which has deepened my understanding of the hobby. I look forward to picking up my reserved copy each month. When regarding the many great artists that have brought Spider-Man to life over the years, names such as Ditko, Romita Sr., McFarlane and Kane are often mentioned. However, one artist which I feel deserves more attention is Ross Andru.

As I work towards completing my run of A.S.M. (for the second time in life), I am eagerly filling the gaps between issues 100-200. Many of these 'swinging seventies' adventures were penciled by Andru--whose trademark seemed to be illustrating Spidey in spectacular aerial acrobatics--quite unlike any other artist before or since! I originally purchased many of these books off the newsstand before discovering my first



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bonafide comic book shop in the wonderful summer of '76. I am interested in knowing more about Mr. Andru's career, particularly his work in the Silver Age.

Finally, I would like to put in a 'plug' for mid-grade and lower grade books. Every scuff and crease is part of the book's personal history. It shows that the comic was read and loved by someone else before me.

Rick Prinsthal, Ontario, Canada

Advanced Collector and CBM Fan writes

Just had the opportunity to purchase and read Overstreet's Advanced Collector, No. 1 (Summer 1993), purchased in the used comic book section of a local shop for 69¢. Gary, it was great! I thoroughly enjoyed all the articles, especially on Steve Ditko and the interview with Harvey Kurtzman. I'm wondering if there was ever a No. 2, or others that followed that superb effort? I'm aware that CBM had issues earlier than your most recent start, but I've not been fortunate enough to find them.

Continued good luck and success on the current CBM, as I look forward to each issue.

Mark Peetz, California

There were six issues, but "Overstreet's Advanced Collector" changed to "Overstreet's Golden Age Quarterly" with issue #2. Issues 3-6 were titled "Gold & Silver, Overstreet's Comic Book Quarterly". I loved the six Quarterlies because they had a very similar content and format to CBM... and I feel that they are truly honorary members of the CBM run, linking CBM Vol I (#1-21) and Vol II (#22 up). Sources tell me that they are not all that easy to find but are really worth the effort... and there's only six to collect! 69¢ sounds like a bargain to me, Mark. Does the dealer have any more? Lemme know!

Searching for Fox Giant Info

If anyone out there is a collector/fan of the Fox Giants, published by Fox, Wm. Wise, Voigt etc., during the 1940s and early 1950s, and has any information on these books, could you please contact me, care of CBM. Anyone who has any of these oddball books and can identify, by title, the rebound contents of the issues they own, would be doing me a big favor, as I am trying to sort these babies out for a future CBM article. Your help is most appreciated.

Steve Sibra, Montana

15¢ Variants

Well, it's been far too long since I last wrote to you folks and I have several topics I'd like to talk about. Let me start by commending you on the fantastic job you are doing. CBM continues to be a super magazine and I look forward to each issue.

First, to Mike Smith who inquired about the page count for All Winners #11... I believe he'll find that the book has, not just one "trimmed" page, but four. He'll find that there are 16 leaves in the front half of the book but only 12 leaves in the back. This approach was indeed used to reduce page count while allowing the machinery to still operate as though it was working on a multiple of 8 pages. From a cursory inspection of the issues of All Winners that I have, I believe that issues #1-8 had full 64 page counts, issues #9-11 had 56 pages, #12-13 had 48 pages #14-15 had 32 pages, and #19 and #21 are back up to 48 pages. I'm not positive on issues #16-18 but I believe they are 32, 48 and 48 pages respectively. There may be cases where a single "trimmed" page exists, but after a (very limited) search, I haven't been able to find any. So, Mike, your friend can rest assured that he has a complete copy of All Winners #11.

Now I have a question. In CBM #42 your great "50 Most Collectible Comics" surveys both include Human Torch #36, the first Atlas issue. Is this for real? My guess is that this is an error and that what was meant was Human Torch #35, the last Timely issue. The 1997 survey listed the book as being from the 1946 to 1949 time period (which fits #35 but not #36), while the 1996 survey lists it as being from the 1938 to 1945 era (which fits neither!). At any rate, the survey was lots of fun. It's interesting to see what books other collectors are really hot for. Of course, it's also a kick to go down the list thinking, "Got that, got that, need that, who cares, I'd trade a kidney for that one! etc..." I'd love to see more surveys of this type.

Next topic, the September, 1940, DC 15¢ cover price variations! You first depicted the Batman #2 variation years ago in the original CBM series and the Overstreet Guide now mentions the existence of this as a copy for Canadian distribution. I have a Detective Comics #43 with a 15¢ cover price and I have seen a copy of Action Comics #28 of this same variety. There may also be a Superman #6, but I haven't actually seen one yet. This would round out DC's 4 big sellers and they would be the most likely candidates for the added effort of making a special 15¢ version for the relatively small Canadian market. Can any-

one out there verify the existence of the Superman #6 variety, or, for that matter, perhaps a More Fun, Adventure, or any other DC title?

I agree that these issues were prepared for the Canadian market rather than as a "test issue" for some U.S. market or possibly even the NY World's Fair. I don't know for sure that they weren't test marketed somewhere in the U.S., but without something to suggest that they were, it's most prudent to assume that they were just meant for Canada. Clearly from looking at the issues surrounding these (use the Photo-Journal, it's cheaper!) you can see that immediately.

What distinguishes these books from most Canadian copies is that, unlike Canadian copies which are generally reprints of U.S. editions, printed in Canada and often with lower production standards, these 15 cent versions were printed in the U.S.A right along with the normal print run. They are absolutely identical to the U.S. market copies in all ways except for cover price. In essence, they really are a variation of the original U.S. print run, and a relatively scarce one at that!

When I first obtained my Detective #43 (in March ,1995), I showed it to several experienced collectors and dealers none of whom had ever seen such a variation. Another specimen has since appeared several times in an ad in CBM (see CBM #44 p.12). Several years ago, I saw the 15¢ Action #28, but its owner was unwilling to part with the book. This is the only 15¢ Action #28 I have seen or heard about. I believe that there are at least two known specimens of the 15¢ Batman #2. I am certain that there are more copies out there, but very few seem to have surfaced. It may well be that in Canada these copies are more common, but I would have expected more to appear in the U.S.A if this was the case. It would be great to hear from any other collectors who may; have had experience with these books. Perhaps some of the more experienced Canadian dealers and collectors could shed some more light on this area.

Well, enough rambling! Keep up the great work!

John Albernaz, Massachusetts

I too, have become obsessed with the 15¢ variants in the last few years and am really perplexed that we can't pin down their origin with more certainty. I believe they are not Canadian editions as some describe them. but rather US editions printed for the Canadian market (there is a difference). But what ever their true background may be, I feel they are among the rarest comics I know of… and have yet to be truly understood by collectors and historians. If any CBM readers can shed additional light on these scarce DC gems, pleeeeze write or call. Thanks for a great letter John!

Praise for Dick Dillin

Issue #45 (March) was your best issue yet! Keep in mind, however, that reading a copy of JLA #8 at summer camp in 1962 turned me into a Silver Age DC fan for life. I am, therefore, not going to be your most objective source of commentary when it comes to the subject matter I think should be featured in your magazine.

There is a point in the "League of Their Own" article by Harry B. Thomas with which I strongly disagree. He writes on page 51 that the "art would suffer terribly" on the later JLA issues, by which he appears to mean anything after #30.

On the contrary! The art of Dick Dillin was, after the first few issues that he did, a thing of beauty to behold! No longer did the heroes look awkward as they did when Mike Sekowsky handled the art. The heroines in particular acquired a luscious, full-lipped appearance! And contrast their fabulous figures with the unnaturally high silicone breasts and strangely long hips that so many of today's comic book women display! (Come on guys! Breasts shouldn't look like Indian rubber balls. Real ones have some degree of drop!)

But I've never seen Dick Dillin's artwork praised in any publication. Am I his only fan?

The other point of contention I have is with the praise Harry Thomas bestows upon JLA #57. In my opinion, both the storyline and cover illustration of this issue were lame. Political correctness is no substitute for plot and the cover sadly lacked the spine-tingling sense of danger that the early JLA covers so wonderfully conveyed.

Van Jonynas, Ontario, Canada

Glenn Miller comics?

Enjoy your "Comic-Quizz" in CBM. In that vein, I'm trying to get the name of the comic book and issue number for a Glenn Miller (Glenn spelled Glen) story in a comic book printed, I would guess late 1941 or early 1942 (it

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doesn't include the 1942 film entitled "Orchestra Wives"). I am enclosing a copy of the Glenn Miller story and presumably the next story which is Jimmy Dorsey. I rather believe that the Glenn Miller story was the first in this comic book, but I am not sure. Several xerox copies of the originals have surfaced, but so far nobody knows where the story came from.

I remember the comic book as I grew up in the Golden Age and was a comic book reader and also a big fan of Glenn Miller. I, of course, do not remember the title of the comic book and so far nobody that I have contacted (Overstreet and others) can help me.

It wasn't one of those True type of comics and think that it was a comic book aimed at teenage girls. I have looked through Gerber's books as have others and we cannot see any evidence of this comic book from the covers that Gerber reproduces.

So far all we have are copies (many in black and white), and one person that worked for the Glenn Miller band has the cut out story of the original comic book, but he does not know the title of the comic book or issue number. I believe comic books in those days usually had the title and issue number on the back of the front cover and not on the first page of the story that was used later on. If this is the first story, no mention is made at the bottom and no mention is made of the comic book title in the story or at the end of the story.

If anybody can help, any suggestions on how to determine the title and issue number of this comic book story would be welcome.

Donald A. Whyte, New York

Quite Disappointed

1 Being born in 1966, I missed the introduction of the JLA. However, as soon as comic books invaded my lifestyle in the early '70s, JLA became a favorite, and of course I "needed" to find back issues to complete my JLA education. Some twenty years later, the holes in my collection can be counted on available digits.

I give you this history because I was quite disappointed in your JLA issue, which included a reprinted article from Overstreet's Price Guide of seven years ago and an utterly confusing and incomplete reprint from the introduction to JLA Archive Vol. 1 (also from 1990). This last piece started on page 35 (although there it said it was continued from page blank), is continued on pages spotted throughout the issue and then stops (before completing) on page 48. Considering the impact, that even CBM stated, The League had on Silver Age history, I was disappointed at how poorly this feature topic was handled. The best aspects of your JLA coverage were Second Time Around by Shawn Hamilton, and, the color JLA gallery photos.

2. Page 36 recounts how Gil Kane was selected as the artist for GL as "a perfect choice". I agree, as a huge Kane fan and owner of an original GL pencil sketch by the master. However, I take issue (as I did when I read it for the first time in '90) with the comment that "his ability to illustrate machinery has yet to be matched", by referring back to your recent issue devoted to Mr. Wally Wood. Truly, no artist could "match" Mr. Wood's ability to illustrate machinery. I do realize that this is my opinion versus someone else's, but I'm right.

3. As a testimonial, I hope advertisers realize that their presence in CBM adds a seal of credentials, trust and interest from, at least, this reader. I never look at advertisements in other comic book trade publications, but read CBM cover to cover monthly.

4. Lunar Landing by Pat Calhoun was enjoyable to the point that I recovered my tattered copy of H. G. Wells' "The First Men in the Moon" and am in the process of re-reading it. As the last of Wells' scientific romances of its time (beginning with "The Time Machine"), this book has a place in sci-fi history. Thanks again Pat.

5. Michelle Nolan continues to be my favorite columnist in your publication. As I've entered my thirty something years, I find myself moving back from Silver Age to Golden Age collecting (when I can afford it). Ms. Nolan has been of great assistance in this endeavor and her insights are always entertaining. This issue's column of possibly non-existent books was another example of her superior research and writing abilities

6. I would like to encourage Bob Brodsky to continue his quest to recognize the industry's "unsung heroes". Well done indeed.

7. I enjoy the closing to your fine publication with the Comic-Quizz, although I must admit it is more educational for me than a game in the form of a trivia page, as I have little hope of answering more than one or two questions correctly each month.

In the same vein, please find enclosed a trivia page from JLA #75 (circa 1969). I found it interesting and perhaps your other readers will too.

I'm tapped out writing, as I'm sure you are reading. 600 words...not bad for a first time letter writer.

Ron Kahan, Colorado

Atom Bomb genre

Absolutely loved CBM's Atom Bomb issue. As a longtime fan of the earliest entries (1945-1959) in the Atom Bomb genre, I thought similarly-minded fans might enjoy a little more on the subject. I have enclosed a few interesting examples from the annals of A-bombery:

1. That weird "Manhattan Project" cover to Atomic Comics #2 was swiped to a very considerable extent from the splash page to the American Avenger story in USA #5.

2. Another great Atom Bomb covers appears on Picture News Vol. 1, No. 1, cover dated January, 1946. My copy has a December 14, 1945, arrival date stamped on the logo. The cover depicts a city in flames and toppling skyscrapers. One of the interesting things about this cover is the way in which the atomic explosion is depicted; the skyscrapers are toppled by explosions in their middle stories, and there is no mushroom cloud which is so familiar to us now. I wasn't around in 1945 to take note of it, but I doubt that Americans knew what an atom bomb blast looked like when this comic was put together in 1945. With this book on the stands in mid-December, 1945, and with the first detonation of an atom bomb (that the world promptly knew about, anyway) on August 6, 1945, and considering the time it probably took to assemble the book for publication, it is doubtful that anyone really knew what the blast would look like. Hence the peculiar illustration of the buildings exploding from their midsections. As an interesting side note, the interior contents feature a comic story in which the legendary George Bernard Shaw warns the world about the destructive hazard of the atom bomb.

3. Under the relatively mundane cover to "Dick Quick Ace Reporter" (which is actually Picture News) #10, January-February, 1947, is a wonderful four pager in which a fifth horseman joins the existing four horsemen the Apocalypse. He wields an atom bomb, wears a gas mask, and his chest is emblazoned with an atomic energy symbol. There are grimly fascinating panels too...of fascist leaders who have conquered a now desolate world through their atomic attack. Pretty compelling stuff.

4. On a lighter note, Dennis the Menace #37 features a visit by young Dennis to a military base open house. The presentation there includes a mock battle, including a spectacular detonation of atomic bombs. While we are told that this demonstration of military might is not "real", the full page panel of an atom bomb exploding on the horizon while silhouetted civilian spectators look on in grandstands, remains memorable indeed, and reminiscent perhaps of the observers who were actually permitted (required?) to watch atom bomb blasts in the '50s. Keep up the good work.

Mike Weng, Illinois

Canadian Weird #12

Recently came across a copy of CBM #27, and was delighted to see a reproduction of the Canadian reprint of Weird #12. I can add a bit of information, which you may or may not already know. I have seen four of these Fox reprints. In addition to Weird #12, there was a Big 3 #2. I believe the other two were a Mystery Men and a Wonderworld, but it was some time ago, and I'm not positive.

As for when they were printed, I think it was in early 1941, the date on all four issues. The War Exchange Conservation Act, which banned importation of comics into Canada, came into effect in December, 1940. Anglo-American, the publisher, began to publish its own titles in March, 1941. I believe the Fox reprints were produced in the gap, but were quickly discontinued, probably because reprinting U.S. comics was considered to be in violation of the Act. Anglo-American later printed many Fawcett stories, but they purchased the scripts and then re-drew the stories with Canadian artists.

Apart from the dates, the production values of the books also indicate early 1941. Anglo-American's first comics were poorly made, with cheap paper, including the covers. Covers were duo-tone and the contents black and white. The company's product improved substantially with time, and, by the time they folded in 1946, their comics were in full color, with good art and thick, glossy colorful covers. The Fox reprints are exactly like the early product, but not consistent with later postwar issues.

I agree these reprints are very rare. Hope this information is of interest.

Kirk Wallace, Saskatchewan, Canada

Missing pages?

I've been meaning to write to you guys, but I keep putting it off. A letter in CBM #46 finally prompted me to do so. Mike Smith's letter concerning a "missing" page in All Winners #11 caught my attention. I don't have firsthand information about this, but I know someone who does—Mark Wilson of World's Finest Comics and Collectibles.

As I was reading Mike's letter, I realized that I had read something about this somewhere before. It took me two or three weeks to figure out where I had read about this, hence the delay in writing this letter. It's funny how my mind works. I seem to be able to instantly recall 90% of the information that comes my way because of my passion for the hobby, but I have a hard time remembering where I get the data without a lot of self-prodding.

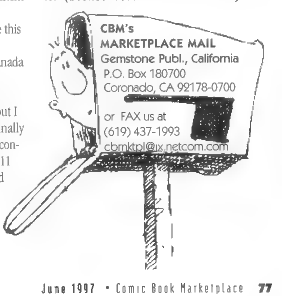
Anyway, about a year or two ago, I read an article in one of Mark Wilson's catalogs on the topic of World War II era page counts. Mark goes on to say that a number of his customers were complaining that he was selling them Golden Age comics that had pages missing. The article explains that this was done purposely by publishers of the time. This was in response to paper shortages toward the end of the war. Mark describes the 1/4" flap that Mike talks about and he says that DC, Timely, Fawcett, and others were all shaving pages to save paper.

I agree that CBM readers should know about this and there should be some mention of it in the Guide. So, if no one else has responded to Mike's letter, I suggest you contact Mark Wilson. I'm sure he'd be glad to help. Maybe he, or whoever gets the information from him could write an article on the subject for CBM. By the way, Mark's article didn't mention anything about comics from the early 1950s, Superman or otherwise, but that doesn't mean they don't exist. As it stands, Mike should tell his friend not to sell his All Winners #11 as a defective copy because I don't think it is.

P.S. Great covers! Keep 'em coming!

Sterling Dashiell, Virginia

Thanks to everyone who took the time to write! Please note letters maybe edited for content and space. Please send your correspondence to: ***(Please note NEW ADDRESS!!!)***



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JOE SHUSTER

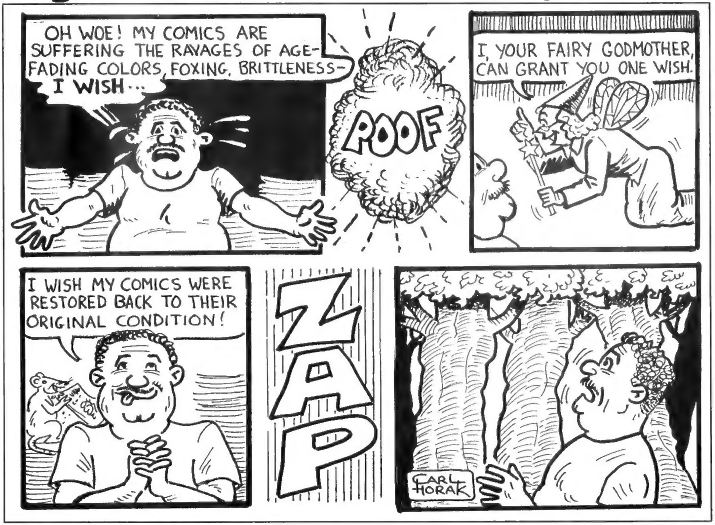
continued from page 33

spirit of Joe Shuster. Joe apparently did have some cartoons published in some of the many "mens' humor" mags that thrived back then. Anyone with more knowledge of this phase of Shuster's career is invited to come forth via the pages of *CBM* and remind us how we should treasure that spirit–one of the true progenitors of the comic book.

I also want to publicly thank Charlie Roberts, as both a Gemstone editor and a comics fan, for sharing this delightful Joe Shuster material. The "Winslow Bicker" sequence that ends his "Stormy Weathers" sketches offers great insight into graphic storytelling. Charlie, along with his comrade-in-arms David Siegel, also deserves credit for networking among the various Golden Age creators and maintaining a link between them and fandom. In addition, Charlie has an admirable tendency to emerge from Golden Age gatherings with a bumper crop of quality photos of the estimable attendees, which he shares with fandom in our ongoing effort to chronicle the history of the comic book in all its four-color glory. ■

Original Condition

by Carl Horak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ROOF
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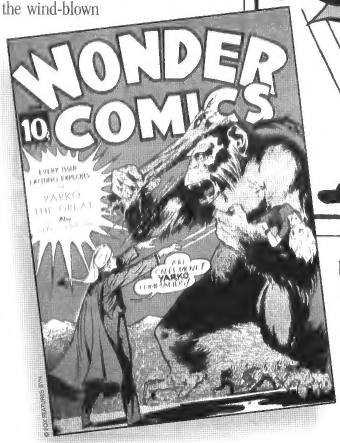
I WISH MY COMICS WERE RESTORED BACK TO THEIR ORIGINAL CONDITION!
ZAP
CARL HORAK

Gorilla Twins?

Lou Fine was renowned for his incredibly detailed work, and his cover to *Wonder Comics* #2 (June 1939) is no exception. His rendition of Yarko The Great is made even more notable by the amazingly detailed gigantic ape... which threatens the costumed magician with a tree trunk... all the while holding the prostrate body of a beautiful blonde in the style of King Kong introduced six years earlier.

Besides *Wonder Comics* readers, the wind-blown



hair and ferocious jowls of the ape must have made a real impression on the young Bob Kane as well, because the simian's "twin" makes a second appearance three months later in *Detective Comics* #31 (Sept. 1939, panel 59, page 9).

Although details are forever lost in comic book history, Bob Kane was working on the *Wonder Comics* staff along side Lou Fine, which might help to explain, the amazing likeness between these "gorilla twins". ■

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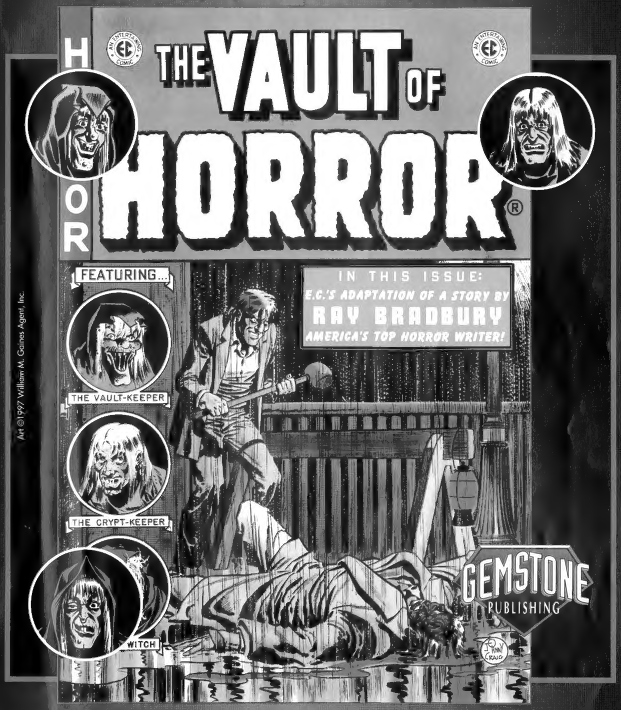

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